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DRAMATIC DIALOGUES,

FOR THE

U S E

OF

YOUNG PERSONS.

by
Am^l Pinchard
of
Taunton



Laura offering Relief to Ruth Saunders.

DRAMATIC DIALOGUES,

FOR THE

U S E

OF

YOUNG PERSONS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE BLIND CHILD.

Mrs. P. Richard

“ True Critics enquire, Does the Work relate to the Interests
of Mankind?—Is its Object useful, and its End moral?—
Will it inform the Understanding, and amend the Heart?”

ESSAY ON SOLITUDE, BY M. ZIMMERMANN.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR E. NEWBERRY, THE CORNER OF ST.
PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

M,DCC,XCII.

[Entered at Stationer's Hall.]



P R E F A C E.

TO publish a Work with the Title borne by this, may, perhaps, by some, be thought presumption, when it is recollected that Madame de Genlis has already occupied the Dramatic line, in a manner to be imitated by few, and, probably, to be equalled by none.—But a comparison of this work with the Theatre of Education, of that great Author, would be unfair as to execution, and unjust as to design.—The Writer of
this

this work does not, like Madame de Genlis, intend her Dramatic Dialogues to be performed; well aware that the length of the Scenes, in some places, and the simplicity of the Plot in all, would render them flat and heavy in representation. The motives by which she was induced to throw her Stories into Dialogue, were a belief that young people are easily captivated and interested by this manner of writing, and the convenience of avoiding the “*said she,*” and “*replied she,*” which becomes so fatiguing in a narration of any length, and which she was so often obliged to break in her last work.

This short explanation the Authoress thought due to herself, lest she should
be

be suspected of endeavouring to imitate one of the first Authors the Age has produced.

If these simple Dialogues should be considered as an additional barrier against the encroachments of error, and an additional support to the efforts of Virtue, the Writer will be most happy ; and she trusts them, tho' not without fear, yet not without hope, to the candour of a generous Public, who at least will give her credit for purity of intention.

THE
MISFORTUNES OF ANGER.

A D R A M A.

IN TWO PARTS.

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. SELWYN,	—	GOVERNESS TO JULIET.
PAULINA,	—	HER COUSIN.
MARY,	—	HER MAID.
JULIET,		
FANNY,	—	A LITTLE GIRL.

“ Our Passions gone, and Reason in her Throne,
“ We wonder at the Mischief we have done.”

WALLER.

SCENE, a Parlour.

*Mary enters, lifts up a tambour frame
which appears to have been thrown
down, picks up the spangles, silks, &c.
—She speaks.*

SO Miss Juliet has been here, I see!
—What put her into a rage with
her tambour, I wonder?—Oh! I see,

B

this

this rose-bud does not look well, so down it went, I'll warrant it, and here lie the spangles and twist thrown all over the floor. For my part, I wonder the frame was not all broke to smash, it would have been like her.—Ah! here comes Miss Paulina! There's a young lady, marry, I wish our's was like her, but no hope of that!

Enter PAULINA, (with a book.)

PAULINA.

Mary, have you seen my cousin?

MARY.

No, Miss, not since breakfast.

PAULINA.

I left her here at her tambour frame—
She said she would work while I read to her.

MARY.

Aye, Miss, but something has gone wrong since that.—*Here* I found the frame, and there lay the silks—Truly, I'm glad I was not here, they'd ha' been thrown at my head.

PAULINA.

Perhaps she is gone to her own room, I'll seek her; if she comes here in the mean time, Mary, tell her I am up stairs.

MARY.

Yes, Miss, to be sure I will.—(*Paulina goes out.*)—Ah! by my truth, there's some pleasure in doing any thing for you, one does not get pinched and called names!—So here's the Governess, yawning as usual, but just up.

Enter Mrs. SELWYN.

*(She speaks in a slow, dull manner,
and yawns often.)*

MRS. SELWYN.

Well, Mary!—Where's Miss Juliet?

MARY.

I don't know, Ma'am, not I, she is in one of her passions to-day; every thing goes wrong with her; she was ready to fight with the looking-glass, while I dressed her this morning, and I don't know how many pinches I got for not being quick enough to please her.

MRS. SELWYN.

She's a strange girl, I can't help laughing at her sometimes.

MARY.

Laughing, Tis no laughing matter, ma'am, I can tell you that, and it only makes her worse.

MRS. SELWYN.

MRS. SELWYN.

She fatigues me so ! I really cannot stay with her long at a time.

MARY, (*aside.*)

No, truly, you take care not to have too much trouble !

Mrs. Selwyn draws a chair indolently, and takes out her work.

MRS. SELWYN.

Well, Mary, go and tell her to come to me, I want her to read.

MARY.

Lord, ma'am, I'm quite afraid to go, she won't mind me.

MRS. SELWYN, (*yawning.*)

And she'll fatigue me sadly too, well, never mind, she'll come bye-and-bye.

Enter FANNY, (crying.)

MARY.

What's the matter with you, Fanny,
what are you crying for?

FANNY.

Miss Juliet!—Miss Juliet!—Oh dear.

MRS. SELWYN.

Child, don't make so much noise, what
has Miss Juliet done to you?

FANNY.

Why, ma'am, an please you, she
met me in the garden, about half an
hour ago, I was a coming up, ma'am,
to beg a little milk for my little sister, for
mother is very bad, and so she said as
how——

MRS. SELWIN.

Don't talk so fast, let's hear what Miss
Juliet did.

FANNY.

FANNY.

Yes, ma'am, and so, ma'am, if you please, I met Miss Juliet; and so she asked me what I wanted, and so I told, and so she——

MRS. SELWYN.

Grant me patience! How many more *so's*?

MARY.

Don't make such a long story, Fanny, tell us, at once, what made you cry.

FANNY.

Yes, I'm a going, so miss asked me to play wi' she, for she said his honour was gone out and Madam Selwyn wa'nt up, and Master Charles was gone to school, and Miss Paulina was up stairs, and she did not know what to do wi' herself.

MRS. SELWYN.

So, there's all the family disposed of.
—Well, child, what then?

FANNY.

Then we vent up stairs, ma'am, and
mifs shewed me her doll, and we played,
but at last,—Oh dear, oh dear!

MRS. SELWYN.

I never heard such a girl in my life.—
What happened then?

FANNY.

Why, mifs beat me, yes, she did, ever
so hard, and scratch'd me.

MRS. SELWYN.

What, all at once, without any cause?

FANNY.

Yes, ma'am, 'cause I let the doll fall.

MRS. SELWYN,

MRS. SELWYN, (*laughing.*)

What nonsense! — Go away, child, take your milk, and bid the cook give you some broth.

FANNY.

Yes, ma'am, thank you ma'am.
(*Aside.*) — But I wo'nt come here any more to be beat about so. (*Mary and Fanny go out.*)

Enter JULIET, (*with her doll.*)

JULIET.

Where's Fanny Wood?

MRS. SELWYN.

Gone home, miss, do you think any body will stay where you are, to be beat and scratched?

JULIET.

I don't care. What business had she to throw down my doll?

B 5

MRS. SELWYN.

MRS. SELWYN.

Do you think she did it on purpose?

JULIET.

I don't know.—Let her take more care then.

MRS. SELWYN.

Has she spoil'd it?

JULIET.

No.

MRS. SELWYN.

Well then, what was there to be in such a rage about?—Come and read.

JULIET.

Not till I have dressed my doll.

MRS. SELWYN.

Well,—make haste then.—(*A pause, Mrs. Selwyn works but slowly and idly, Juliet*

liet dresses her doll, at last, she stamps her foot, and says:—

You tiresome creature, won't you be be dress'd?

MRS. SELWYN.

My stars, Miss Juliet, how you make one start.—What is the matter now?

JULIET.

Why, my nasty doll is such a torment.

MRS. SELWYN.

Very pretty, to quarrel with a bit of painted wood!—Oh! you silly child!—Come, leave your doll, and let me hear you read.

JULIET.

I tell you I won't.

MRS. SELWYN.

Oh! you are a sweet little girl, so mild and so obliging; how everybody loves you.

JULIET, (*Crying.*)

Let me alone then !

MRS. SELWYN.

Pretty creature !—What a sweet face !
—Look how your doll stares at you !

JULIET, (*Rising in a passion, and throwing
her doll across the room.*)

I wish the doll was a thousand miles
off, a little provoking creature !—(*Mrs.
Selwyn laughs.*)—I won't be laugh'd at,
that I won't.

MRS. SELWYN.

How will you help it ? — Leave off
crying directly, or I will shut you up for
two hours. — (*Another pause, Juliet still
cries, but by degrees becomes quiet, after
some time she calls.*)—Mary !—Mary !

MRS. SELWYN.

What now, miss ?

JULIET.

JULIET.

I want Mary. — (*calls*) — Mary, I say!

Enter MARY.

MARY.

Mercy, miss, I came as soon as ever I heard you.

JULIET.

You are always so slow.—Take down my goldfinch, and fetch me some feed and water.

MARY.

Yes, miss. (*She reaches the bird down, then goes out, and returns with some water and feed.*)

JULIET.

Come my pretty, let your mistress feed you, I love you very much.—(*She feeds it.*)

MRS. SELWYN.

MRS. SELWYN.

Yes, you love it vastly just now, but sometimes you are ready to wring its neck, when it does not eat to please you.

MARY, (*aside.*)

One would think Mrs. Selwyn liked to see her in a passion, she delights so in teasing her!

JULIET, (*feeding the bird.*)

Oh, you little torment, you *won't* eat out of my hand!

MRS. SELWYN.

There, I told you so, now, miss, you had better beat the bird, or throw it across the room, as you did your doll.

JULIET.

So I will, if I please.

MRS. SELWYN.

MRS. SELWYN.

Do, I would advise you!

MARY.

Dear ma'am, how *can* you?

JULIET.

Come, eat then.—You *won't*!—You nasty, little obstinate, ungrateful creature, —I'll teach you to tease me, I will.—
(*She snatches the bird out of the cage in a passion, gives it a squeeze, then looks at it, and bursts into tears.*)—Oh! Heaven, I have killed my bird!—

MARY.

Oh, dear, miss, I hope not.

JULIET.

Look at it, Mary, pray try if you can fetch it to life!—Oh my poor bird.—Is it dead, Mary?—

MARY.

Yes, miss, you have killed it.

JULIET. .

JULIET.

I!—*I have killed it!*—I that loved it so!—Oh! how unhappy I am!

MARY.

Don't cry so, miss, you was not so much to blame now.

Enter PAULINA.

PAULINA.

Dear Juliet, what's the matter?

JULIET, (*Throws herself into Paulina's arms.*)

Oh! cousin, why did you leave me?
—I am never so naughty when you are with me.

PAULINA.

My dear, I have been seeking you, at last I heard you was playing with Fanny Wood, so then I sat down to write to mama.—But what has happened?—

MRS. SELWYN.

MRS. SELWYN.

Oh! Miss Juliet has been in one of her usual furies.—I must dress.—I am tired out with her.—Mary will tell you, Miss Paulina. *(She goes out.)*

MARY, *(muttering.)*

And 'tis as much your fault as her's this time, I must say, teaze, teaze, for ever.

PAULINA.

Mary, what is the matter?

MARY.

Shall I tell, miss?

JULIET.

Oh! my cousin will hate me.

PAULINA.

I hate you, my dear, no, I shall pity you.

MARY.

MARY.

Why, miss, my young lady was feeding her bird, and hurt it some-how, and 'tis dead.

JULIET.

No, Paulina, that is not all; I was angry with my poor bird, I gave it a sudden squeeze, and killed it.

PAULINA.

My dear cousin, you almost redeem your faults by this openness of heart.—How I pity you, how much you must feel on this occasion!

JULIET, (*weeping, but with gentleness.*)

But you, who are so good, how much you must detest me!

MARY.

To tell you the truth, Miss Paulina, my young lady was not so much to blame

blame as she is sometimes. Mrs. Selwyn did teaze her sadly, that she did, to be sure.

JULIET.

But that was not my bird's fault!—Ah, my poor bird, he will never eat out of my hand again!—How could I be so cruel as to hurt a little creature who loved me so dearly.

PAULINA.

Leave us, Mary. (*Mary goes out.*)

PAULINA, JULIET.

PAULINA.

Do not distress yourself so much, my dear Juliet.

JULIET.

Do I not deserve to be distressed?

PAULINA.

You have certainly been wrong.

JULIET.

JULIET.

Ah! You do not know half how naughty I have been: I pinched Mary, I beat Fanny Wood!—What is it makes me so wicked, Paulina? I always know when I am so, and I am unhappy; then I fret, and do wrong again.

PAULINA.

I can easily conceive all that, you are greatly to be pitied.

JULIET.

But you are the only person (except my father) who ever speaks to me as if I had common sense!—Mary shrugs up her shoulders and leaves me as soon as she can.—Mrs. Selwyn laughs at me and treats me like a baby. It was but just now she bade me “*look how my doll stared at me!*” And that put me into such a passion, that I threw my doll across the room.

PAULINA.

PAULINA.

Certainly Mrs. Selwyn does not treat you properly, but that does not justify you. You are now, my dear, more than twelve years old; at that age, though children, we are no longer babies, but you do not seek to improve yourself. You read, indeed, because you love reading, but not with a steady view to your own improvement, and almost all the remainder of your time is spent in dressing your doll and playing with Fanny Wood, who is too ignorant to be a proper companion for you; thus you tempt others to treat you like a baby.—I do not offend you?

JULIET.

No, no,—I like to hear you because you speak to me gently, and I feel what you say. Pray, dear Paulina, tell me what I must do to be like you.

PAULINA.

PAULINA.

My dear Juliet, I wish you a better example;—if you were with us, mama would soon teach you to be all your friends could wish.—But Juliet, with the understanding nature has given you, you may do much for yourself. In the words of a very great author I will tell you that

————— “ There is no soul
More able to direct you than yourself,
If with the sap of Reason you would quench,
Or but allay the Fire of Passion!” —————

Read more, and reflect. —Whenever you find yourself getting angry, leave the cause of your displeasure, take a book which amuses you, and read till you find yourself calm and easy. Struggle with your violent passions, and think to what dreadful consequences they will lead if you indulge them.

JULIET.

JULIET.

Consequences!

PAULINA.

Yes, my dear cousin, I know not to what an excess they may transport you in time, if they are not now opposed.—My mother told me, the other day, she had just read the history of a man, who, when a boy, squeezed his squirrel to death as you did your bird, and when he grew up, after various crimes, being angry with his wife, his child, who was in her arms, happened to cry while he was speaking, and, in a fit of passion, he laid his hand on it, and strangled it in a moment!

JULIET.

Oh! Heaven, how shocking; do you think it *possible*, Paulina, do you think it *possible* I should ever do so?

PAULINA.

PAULINA.

It is impossible to say to what extravagance passion may lead !—But yesterday you would have detested the idea of injuring your bird—and are we not told in the Bible, that when the Prophet foretold to Hazael* the miseries he would bring on his country, and the cruelties of which he would be guilty, he exclaimed, “ Is thy servant a *dog* that he should do this *great* thing ? ”—And yet when he gave way to his passions, he exactly verified the Prophet’s words.

JULIET.

Oh, Paulina ! you terrify me extremely—I will indeed try to be good—I will not beat Fanny, nor pinch Charles any more.

* See 8th Chapter of the 2d Book of Kings.

PAULINA.

PAULINA.

I wish you may not.—It is time for us to dress, your father will be at home presently, and I hear Charles is just come from school.

(They go out.)

END OF THE FIRST PART.

C

PART

PART THE SECOND.

Juliet enters from the garden, she draws a chair, sits down, and leans her head on her hand.

JULIET.

I HAVE a sad head-ach, it always comes when I cry so much.—How true is what Paulina said just now, that I make myself wretched by indulging my passions!—Why did nobody ever tell me so before?—(*She takes a picture from her bosom and kisses it.*)—Oh, my dear mother!—You died too early to form, by your example, the daughter you loved so tenderly!—Wretched girl!—Why do I ever, for a moment, forget the character which my father drew of my mother when he gave me this picture.—

“ Be

“ Be like your mother, my Juliet; she was mild and gentle to all, she was beloved by every one who knew her! her dying wish was, that you might be virtuous!—My child, be worthy of your mother!—Yes, those were exactly his words. Ah! how little do I fulfil her wishes!—I, who ill-treat the servant to whose care she intrusted my infancy—Who abuse a poor child whose situation should make me pity her!—I whom every body hates!—Torn by contrary feelings!—Capable of knowing when I do wrong, yet yielding to the next temptation.—In spite of my faults, am I not to be pitied?

Enter MARY.

MARY.

Miss, my master bade me tell you he is going to Mr. Richley's, and shall be back in less than an hour.

C 2

JULIET.

JULIET.

Very well.

MARY.

What is the matter, miss, you are crying?

JULIET.

I have reason to cry.

MARY.

I am sure, miss, I don't know any young lady who might be happier.— You have the best of fathers.

JULIET.

Ah! that is true.

MARY.

And here you have a fine house, where you are, as one may say, mistress, and a carriage, and every earthly thing you can wish.—Only think of the poor children down in the village: the little Wood's, whose

whose mother is so sick, and who are half starved!

JULIET.

Alas, yes!—And I have ill-treated poor Fanny!—My dear Mary, do go down to the village and give her this shilling; I will beg papa, presently, to send our apothecary to her mother.

MARY.

Oh, miss, what a pity you are not always good, how every body would love you.

JULIET.

I hope they will in future.

Enter PAULINA.

PAULINA.

Juliet, what are you going to do?

C 3

JULIET.

JULIET.

I am going to read to Mrs. Selwyn, in her own room, and afterwards Charles and I are going to play.

PAULINA.

Very well, then I will finish my letter to mama.

JULIET.

Do so.—I shall not stay long with Mrs. Selwyn.—Let me know, Mary, when my father comes in.

MARY.

Yes, miss.

(*Juliet goes out.*)

PAULINA, MARY.

MARY.

Miss Juliet seems very unhappy to-day.

PAULINA.

Yes, she has naturally a strong sense of what is right; she feels that she is wrong, and of course is unhappy.

MARY.

MARY.

I cannot help loving her, though she is sometimes so much out of the way. She was a sweet child before she grew so passionate, and she has a great deal of good about her still. How my poor lady would have grieved had she lived to see her so head-strong !

PAULINA.

Had it pleased Heaven to spare Mrs. Beecher, Juliet would probably have been a very different character ; she has an admirable understanding, but she is ill educated.

MARY.

That's true, indeed, miss. I take the liberty of speaking to you, because you know how I love all this family, and that I have lived in it long enough to know something about it.

PAULINA.

Yes, Mary, you may speak to me without fear; I know your attachment to your late lady and all that belonged to her.

MARY.

Ah, miss, I wish my young lady lived with you, you are so mild and so sensible, and my lady your mother is so fine a character——

PAULINA.

I have reason to glory in my mother.
—May I be one day like her.

MARY.

You will, miss, nay, you *are* already; truly I hear of you from all parts.—But I know you don't wish to be praised.—What I was going to say, is this:—Nobody hears us?—No.—Indeed, Miss Paulina, Mrs. Selwyn is not fit to have the care of my young lady.

PAULINA.

PAULINA.

It is true indeed.

MARY.

She sets her no example but laziness, and she teazes her out of her wits;—if you had but heard her this morning——

PAULINA.

I see it with pain. She has no command over my cousin, because she puts herself on a level with her by mean teasing and raillery;—a passionate temper was never mended by irritation.——By the way, I don't much like this scheme of playing with Charles; Juliet and he always quarrel, and I am afraid he will overthrow all her good resolutions. I mean to speak to my uncle, to-night, about Mrs. Selwyn, not to blame or censure her, but merely to say I think she does not exactly follow the right method of managing my cousin's temper.

C 5

MARY.

MARY.

Truly I think not.

PAULINA.

I intend to ask my uncle to let Juliet return with me, I know mama wishes it.

MARY.

I wish he may, miss, with all my heart.

PAULINA.

Well, I will go and write my letter.

(She is going, when Juliet rushes in apparently much terrified.)

JULIET.

Oh Paulina!—Mary!—Help, help!

MARY.

Oh dear, miss, what's the matter?

JULIET.

My brother!—help—help him!—go to him.

(Mary



Juliet's Distress on wounding her Brother.

(Mary runs out, Juliet sinks down with her head against a chair, Paulina goes to her.)

PAULINA.

Cousin!—My dear Juliet, what is the matter?—Oh, Heaven! she is fainting!—What shall I do, shall I run to Charles?—No, I cannot leave this dear girl.—Juliet, revive, smell to my salts.—*(Juliet recovering, rises on her knees, and clings round Paulina.)*

JULIET.

Oh, Paulina!—Send for some help.—Run to my father.—My father!—Good Heaven! he will hate me for ever.—I shall be banished his sight; plead for me. Paulina!—Wretched girl!—What will become of me!

PAULINA.

For pity's sake tell me what you have done?

C 6

JULIET.

JULIET.

What have I done?—I know not!—
Perhaps I have killed my brother!

PAULINA, (*shudders and springs back.*)

Unhappy girl!

JULIET.

Oh! well may you shudder, well may
you look at me with horror!—You who
warned me; how dare I clasp my arms
round you.—Those hands, which, (how
can I live to tell it) perhaps have mur-
dered my brother. (*She faints.*)

PAULINA.

With what terror do I hear her, (*she
leans over her.*) Wretched victim of un-
govern'd passion!—Revive, fear not my
reproaches!—Ah, thou art already too
miserable!

Enter

Enter MARY.

MARY.

Ah, miss, what shall we do?—I have sent for a surgeon.

PAULINA.

How is he hurt?

MARY.

Alas! I know not how much, the knife has struck him near the eye.

PAULINA.

The knife!

MARY.

Yes, they were at play and quarrelled, Miss Juliet had a knife in her hand, which she threw at him.

PAULINA.

How dreadful!—let us run to him!—
Yet, Juliet! But why should I seek to re-
vive

vive her!—Unhappy creature, she wakes but to woe!—Perhaps he may be blinded!—I stiffen with horror!—Ah, I hear the surgeon; follow me, Mary! (*They run out.*)

(*JULIET, alone and recovering.*)

Paulina, where am I!—You will not speak!—What have I done!—Ah I remember—too, too well I remember!—(*She raises herself*)—They are gone!—They leave me!—to die alone!—Alas I deserve it!—Am I worthy that one creature should pity me!—Yet the torments I endure!—Can they atone for my crime?—Never, never!—Dreadful idea!—must I suffer thro' life the anguish I feel at this moment?—Thro' life—what terrible fears crowd upon me!—(*she kneels,*) Oh God of mercy! hear me, pity me!—Ah He is a God of justice!—Can he forgive me who have murdered my Brother?—What a wretch am I!—

Enter

Enter MARY.

MARY.

Miss Juliet, are you better?

JULIET.

Yes, Mary.—Have you seen —

MARY.

Your brother?—yes, Miss.

JULIET.

Ah, you weep!

MARY.

Truly yes, I am frightened to death.

JULIET.

I am the unhappy cause.—I dread to hear—I dare not ask.

MARY.

The surgeon is with him; I could not stay any longer to see him suffer so.

JULIET.

Suffer!

MARY.

Yes, the surgeon is obliged to hurt him, to find if the wound is—I cannot speak it!

JULIET.

Mortal you would say?—How is it that I have courage to pronounce that horrible word?—Ah, I gather courage from the excess of my despair.

MARY.

Oh my poor master, what will he say!

JULIET.

Do not distract me!—Pity for a moment the pangs I suffer!—Leave me, Mary, leave me, I implore you!—Go, learn if there is any hope! (*Mary goes out.*)

JULIET.

I have lost every-thing!—My father will drive me from him for ever—I shall quit every-thing I love!—My friends,

my relations will blush when my name is mentioned—Never more shall I revisit these scenes, so dear to my infancy!—Let me not recall the years I have past—years of innocence and happiness!—Go where I will, I shall be pointed at and hated.—Even the picture of my mother, which I used in all my distresses to console me, I can never see again.—I should fancy it reproached me.—And all this misery I have incurred by one moment of passion!—Oh God, if thou should'st this once deign to save me, never, never, will I be guilty again!

Enter PAULINA, (running.)

PAULINA.

Juliet!—my dear cousin!—be comforted.

JULIET.

Ah! what then!—What!—may I, dare I hope!

PAULINA.

PAULINA.

Yes—the surgeon says he is in no danger.

JULIET, (*throwing herself into her arms.*)

Oh my best Paulina!

PAULINA, (*embracing her with tears.*)

I ran to you the instant I heard it.

JULIET.

I have not deserved your goodness.

PAULINA.

Ah Juliet!—if the knife had gone ever so little on one side, Charles would have been killed, or on the other, and he would have been blinded for ever.

JULIET.

Oh merciful, Almighty God!—from what misery has thy providence preserved me!—even now I cannot behold myself without horror.—Have I deserved the
mercy

mercy I have met with?—No!—tho' innocent in intention, my action was guilty.—I could not wish to hurt my brother, yet took the means to do so!—Detested passion!—Oh Paulina, I am cured for ever!

PAULINA.

I dare hope so!—The lessons of this day have been striking.—They shew how one step in evil leads to another.—Awful and horrid might have been the event, but as it has proved, we will hope this instruction has been directed by Providence, to warn you of your danger!

JULIET.

It has done it completely.—But Paulina, where is my father?

PAULINA.

I hear him now in the hall.

JULIET.

Oh Paulina, I dare not see him.

PAULINA.

PAULINA.

I will go to him, and I hope, return with your pardon.

JULIET.

My best friend—let actions speak my gratitude; deign but to counsel and direct me, henceforth I will be guided by you alone. *(Paulina goes out.)*

Enter Mrs. SELWYN and MARY.

MARY.

Well, Miss Juliet, make yourself easy, all goes well.

JULIET.

Thank God!

MRS. SELWYN.

You have had good fortune, Miss, I can tell you.

JULIET.

Good fortune, Ma'am! I dare to consider it as the act of Divine Providence, if not to save *me*, yet to preserve my father from misery.

MRS. SELWYN.

MRS. SELWYN.

You improve, Miss, your language is really fine.

JULIET.

Misfortunes correct the heart, and strong feelings excite strong expression.—I hope I shall improve.

MRS. SELWYN.

You astonish me!—you who but this morning were dressing your doll, to be making *wise* remarks, is indeed surprising!

JULIET.

I am not a fool, tho' I have acted like one.

MARY.

No, no, they an't very wise that take you for a fool. I have often heard you talk to my master as sensible as any-body in the world.

MRS. SELWYN.

Miss Juliet never indulged me with any of her sensible conversation.

MARY.

MARY.

Truly no, because you treated her like a baby.

MRS. SELWYN.

You take great liberties.

MARY.

I beg your pardon, Ma'am, but I have often told you you did not know my young lady so well as I did.

MRS. SELWYN.

The more sense she has, the more shame for her to behave as she has done.

JULIET.

Too true indeed!—my conscience tells me I have not the excuse of folly.—But I have suffer'd passion to over-run and darken all my good qualities. This one hour has driven it from my heart. I am no longer a foolish child.

Enter

Enter PAULINA.

PAULINA.

Come, my dearest Juliet.—Charles is with your father, he knows all, he forgives you, he calls for you.

JULIET.

I owe every-thing to you!

PAULINA.

I have more good news for you—one word.

(*Mrs. Selwyn and Mary retire to the back of the Scene.*) You go home with me—you are to stay with us as long as you please!

JULIET.

Delightful!—

PAULINA.

Your father dismisses Mrs. Selwyn.

JULIET.

JULIET.

Ah I am sorry!—She is poor, and she has taught me many things.

PAULINA.

My good cousin, how I love that gratitude!—your father will allow her a pension, we have settled all that since I left you.

JULIET.

Oh my best cousin!—how much do I owe you.

PAULINA.

I am overpaid if you are happy.

JULIET.

To be so I must be good.—That will be the work of your hands!—How will you be loved by your friends, by your mother, by Heaven itself!—yes that *will* repay you.

PAULINA.

Let us go, my uncle expects us.

Scene closes.

SEN-

SENSIBILITY.

A D R A M A.

IN TWO PARTS.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. MELVILLE,

MRS. RIVERS,

CECILIA, — DAUGHTER OF MRS. RIVERS.

ISABELLA, — DAUGHTER OF MRS. MELVILLE.

MARTHA, — MRS. MELVILLE'S MAID.

— Exclamations, tender tones, fond tears,
And all the graceful drap'ry Pity wears,
These are not Pity's self, they but express
Her inward sufferings, by her pictured dress;
And these fair marks, reluctant I relate,
These lovely symbols may be counterfeit.

SENSIBILITY.—MISS MOORE:

SCENE, *a Dressing-room, at Mrs.
Melville's.*

(A Table standing with Work, and Books.)

Enter MRS. RIVERS, CECILIA, and
MARTHA.

MARTHA.

PRAY, ma'am, walk in, I will let my
mistress know you are here, she is
D walking

walking in the garden with Miss Melville.—Won't you please to sit?

(She places chairs, they sit down.)

MRS. RIVERS.

Thank you, Martha, don't hurry your mistress. *(Martha goes out.)*

CECILIA.

This is a pretty room, mama.

MRS. RIVERS.

Very much so, I see it again with great pleasure.

CECILIA.

It is some time, I think, since you were here.

MRS. RIVERS.

Yes, near two years. Mrs. Melville has been gone so long on business of her late husband's to an estate he had in Jamaica.

CECILIA.

How glad you will be to see her again! What a delightful day we shall spend!

MRS. RIVERS.

MRS. RIVERS.

It will indeed give me great pleasure.

CECILIA.

But her daughter!—Oh, mama, what joy to her to see her mother again after an absence of two years!—I should envy her, if I had not passed those two years with the best of mothers.

MRS. RIVERS.

She has indeed probably lost much by so long an absence from her who is so well able to instruct her.

CECILIA.

Undoubtedly!—Ah, whose instructions can teach the heart so soon as those of a mother, whose reproofs proceed from affection, whose praises are the greatest glory of a child!

MRS. RIVERS.

It is true,—a child must be obstinate indeed, who refuses to listen to the in-

structions of a fond mother.—Mrs. Melville is entitled to her daughter's best affections, not only by the goodness of her heart and understanding, but by the sacrifices she has made for her sake.—When Mr. Melville died, he left his large estate in Jamaica to his little girl: on enquiry, her mother found that the estate had been, and still was, ill managed by the steward; in short, that nothing but the presence of some person interested in its improvement could render it half so valuable as it had been supposed.—She determined, therefore, to overcome her dread of the sea, which all her life had been extreme; to leave her friends, her sister, even her child, in England, and undertake the voyage herself.—This she has done; has restored the estate to the most flourishing condition, and is now returned to enjoy the reward of her labours.

CECILIA.

CECILIA.

What a charming character!—(*A short pause.*) I like this room very much, 'tis so pleasant and quiet—(*She rises and walks about*)—Mama, may I look at this book?

MRS. RIVERS.

If you please, as it is lying open to every-one's inspection, it cannot be improper, but it is impertinent and ill-bred to look even into *printed* books, which are placed out of immediate view.

CECILIA.

"The Beauties of Sterne!"—It has Miss Melville's name in it.—I do not know this book, Mama.

MRS. RIVERS.

No, my dear, tho' it has great merit in point of writing and sentiment, it is not exactly the book I should chuse for you at present. In my opinion it recommends too much the enervating mind of Sensibility, to which I so greatly object.—But here come Mrs. Melville and Isabella.

Enter MRS. MELVILLE and ISABELLA.

MRS. MELVILLE.

My dear friend, how much I rejoice to see you!

MRS. RIVERS.

The pleasure is mutual, believe me!—It is so long since we met, I began to fear we should meet no more!—This is, I believe, Miss Melville, but so grown I should hardly have known her!

MRS. MELVILLE.

Not more than Miss Rivers.—I must have these young people acquainted.

(Mrs. Melville introduces Cecilia and Isabella to each other, they curtsy, and seem to talk apart.)

MRS. RIVERS.

I hope they will be so, nothing can give me more pleasure.

MRS. MELVILLE.

But I forget to beg your pardon for keeping you waiting, I had strolled beyond

yond the garden into the field, and Martha could not find me.—She has shewn you into a litter'd room.

MRS. RIVERS.

No apology is necessary, I have long known and loved this room.

MRS. MELVILLE.

It is my daughter's now, I gave it up to her the day after my return, and she has already brought hither her books and work—so that she has the confusion to answer for—*(smiling.)*

MRS. RIVERS.

It is a becoming confusion, I like to see books and work about in a young person's apartment.

ISABELLA.

Mine would have been in better order, mama, if you had not called me away suddenly.—Besides I hardly know where I am, or what I do at present.

D 4

MRS. RIVERS.

MRS. RIVERS.

I dare say, my dear, you have hardly yet recovered, if I may so express myself, the happiness of seeing your mother!

ISABELLA.

No indeed, Ma'am!—The extreme joy almost overcame me. It may well be called *recovery*, for such delight is really suffering! (*Mrs. Rivers looks at her with some surprise.*)

MRS. MELVILLE.

Mine was, and still is, exquisite!—To return once more to my friends, to my sister, to my daughter, is happiness so great as wholly to repay me all I have suffered in my absence from them!

MRS. RIVERS.

No doubt, every sacrifice we make of pleasure to duty will, sooner or later, be repaid; even the conviction of having done so carries with it a comfort to the heart

heart superior to all the advantages to be derived from a deviation from virtue.

MRS. MELVILLE.

You say true. It was with extreme regret that I prepared to quit England, and to leave my daughter; but the assurance that my departure was necessary to her future welfare, the dread of endangering her health, then extremely delicate, by taking her with me, and the conviction that I left her in proper care, conspired to determine me, and I am now repaid.

ISABELLA.

But, mama, I should have been so afraid of the sea and storms!

MRS. MELVILLE.

Go, you are a silly child, to form such a terrible idea of dangers, which are principally imaginary.—But, my dear Mrs. Rivers, will you go with me to my greenhouse?—I have some curious West-India plants.

D 5

MRS. RIVERS.

MRS. RIVERS.

With all my heart.—Children, will you stay here, or go with us?

MRS. MELVILLE.

Oh, they shall remain here.—They will become better acquainted in our absence:
(*Mrs. Rivers and Mrs. Melville go out.*)

CECILIA, ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.

Let us sit down, my dear Miss Rivers.
(*They sit.*)—What pleasure I hope to derive from your acquaintance!

CECILIA.

My mother I am sure will be happy in my forming an intimacy with you, she has so high an opinion of Mrs. Melville!

ISABELLA.

It will give me infinite pleasure.—Suffer me to say I already feel I shall love you extremely, I am already attached to
2 you.

you.—Dear Cecilia, may I believe the impression is mutual !

CECILIA.

I have no doubt, on a farther acquaintance, my gratitude for your kindness will ripen into real regard.

ISABELLA.

You are very good!—(*She assumes a melancholy air.*)—Hitherto I have been very unfortunate in my friendships !

CECILIA, (*with a smile.*)

You are very young to complain of that.

ISABELLA, (*earnestly.*)

Alas yes!—The misfortune of too great sensibility is mine.—You can have no idea what I have suffered—what I do at this moment suffer !

CECILIA.

You alarm and distress me.—What at your age can have happened to make you so uneasy ?

ISABELLA, (*shedding tears.*)

Alas, my dear Cecilia, amidst all my joy for the return of my mother, I endure severe regret, *bitter anguish* I might call it.

CECILIA.

Good Heaven! on what account.

ISABELLA, (*embracing her.*)

Amiable girl!—I see you sympathize with me.

CECILIA.

I do indeed, but surely you would not have told me so much without intending to explain yourself.

ISABELLA.

No, my *sweet friend*. *—From your tenderness I expect the only consolation of which my situation is capable.—How will your kind and gentle nature pity me when you hear the loss I have sustained!

* The inflated and strong language Isabella uses, is one symptom of False Sensibility.—To apply violent terms on common occasions is equally absurd and unnatural.

CECILIA.

CECILIA.

What can it be, when your mother is still with you?

ISABELLA.

At the feat of my aunt, where I have been during my mother's absence, I contracted a *strong* and *ardent* attachment to a young lady about your age.—I even think you resemble her,—you have the same softness of complexion, the same sweet smile!

CECILIA, (*embracing her.*)

Ah, my dear Isabella, I will spare you the relation.—I guess too easily what you have suffered!—It is true I have never formed any friendship out of my own family, but I can conceive what its feelings must be.—And have you really lost, for ever, a tie so tender?

ISABELLA.

Not, I hope, *for ever.*

CECILIA.

CECILIA.

How!—I have misunderstood you.—
I believe you meant to have said she was
dead.

ISABELLA.

Oh no!—I should hardly be able to sur-
vive so great a misfortune.—Is it not
enough to be separated from her?

CECILIA.

You fear you shall, perhaps, meet her
no more!

ISABELLA.

No.—She is to spend the greatest part
of the summer with me.

CECILIA.

I do not understand—what then do you
lament?

ISABELLA.

What?—Surely her absence at present!

CECILIA.

What the absence of a few months do
you regret so deeply!—I profess you
surprise me!

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA, (*a little disconcerted.*)

But I have been so accustomed to see her every day, she is so charming—and my misfortune is too great sensibility!

CECILIA.

Can sensibility become a misfortune and a torment?—I have been taught to consider it as the source of goodness and delight.—True, indeed, we may be sometimes severely pained by the impossibility of relieving those whom we pity, by the illness of friends, and various other circumstances, but at the same time an active wish to do good warms and cheers the heart, and when we stifle our anguish and carefully attend the sick-bed of those we love, do we not feel such comfort as half repays us for the sorrow we endure in seeing them suffer!

ISABELLA.

But unfortunately I feel so much, I can do very little to relieve the pain of those
I love;

I love; my presence of mind forsakes me,
and I become unable to assist them.

CECILIA.

But pardon me for saying that it is a
sort of weakness against which we ought
to struggle, our feeling becomes useless,
worse than useless; it *disables* us if it does
does not *prompt* us to action. We might
as well not feel for the unhappy, as not
seek to relieve them!

ISABELLA.

I sympathise with them, but my spirits
are so weak I can do little more.

CECILIA.

I protest I do not understand you.

Enter MARTHA.

MARTHA.

Oh, dear Miss Melville, a sad thing
has happened!

ISABELLA.

Oh Heavens! what? You alarm me
beyond expression!

MARTHA.

MARTHA:

Don't be too much frightened, miss, 'tis well it's no worse, but you will be vexed?—

ISABELLA.

I entreat you to tell me what has happened at once.

MARTHA.

Why, miss, your pretty parrot has hurt himself sadly.

ISABELLA.

Ah! my poor parrot, what has he done?

MARTHA.

Miss, he was standing upon his perch, when a great dog followed the baker into the kitchen, Poll was frightened, and flew to the window, dash'd himself against a pane of glass, broke it, and cut himself very much with the pieces.

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA, (*in tears.*)

Oh! what shall I do, what shall I do!

CECILIA.

My dear Isabella, don't distress yourself so,—I dare say he will soon be well again,—let us go and see if we can do any thing for him.

ISABELLA.

Oh! I cannot bear to see him.

MARTHA.

Dear miss, he will soon be well, but somebody should put something to the cut.

ISABELLA.

Martha, will you?

MARTHA.

I would with all my heart, Miss, but I burned my hand so yesterday I cannot hold him, and our silly cook is afraid of his biting her.

ISABELLA.

Will Thomas?

MARTHA.

MARTHA.

Thomas is not at home, Miss.

CECILIA.

Dear Isabella, I will do it—'tis true I shall be sorry to see the poor creature in pain, but I cannot bear the idea of not assisting him.

ISABELLA.

You are extremely good!

CECILIA.

Poor thing! he is suffering all this time. Come, my dear, let us go to him.

ISABELLA.

Oh, I cannot see him.

CECILIA.

Not see him!

MARTHA.

Dear Miss, the poor thing knows you, and he will be quiet if you are by.

ISABELLA.

Oh, but indeed it will make me ill.

CECILIA.

CECILIA.

Pooh, pooh, a run in the garden will soon make you well again!

ISABELLA.

What spirits you have!

CECILIA.

To be sure—that is natural at my age—what have *I* to be melancholy about?

ISABELLA.

You are very happy!

CECILIA.

You have as much cause to be happy as I have; but come along. (*They go out.*)

MARTHA.

That's a charming young lady!—How she runs along, and how chearful she looks!—What ails Miss Isabella, I wonder; she always looks sorrowful, and sighs, and walks so slowly, I see that already.—Truly, that is unnatural at her age.

Enter

Enter MRS. RIVERS, MRS. MELVILLE.

MRS. MELVILLE.

Martha, where are the young ladies?

MARTHA.

Marry, Ma'am, they are gone to see the poor Parrot; he has hurt himself, and they are gone to help him.

MRS. MELVILLE.

Very well, they are well employed.

(Martha goes out.)

MRS. MELVILLE, MRS. RIVERS.

MRS. MELVILLE.

My dear friend, I am so charmed to see you, and so anxious to talk with you, that I fear I shall quite fatigue you with *prate!*

MRS. RIVERS.

Not at all; assure yourself I am too much interested in all which concerns you, and am indeed eager to have an unrestrained conversation with you.

MRS. MELVILLE.

MRS. MELVILLE.

I am equally eager; and as the first subject to a fond mother is her child, we will talk of ours. I am not quite satisfied with Isabella.

MRS. RIVERS.

How so?—She appears gentle and sensible!

MRS. MELVILLE.

Yes, she has many good qualities, but I see with pain that one of the most amiable she carries to an excess which makes me wish she possessed it not: it gives her so much pain, and will thro' life be so often a source of distress to her, that I could almost wish to suppress it entirely.

MRS. RIVERS.

Pray tell me what it is—you really alarm me!

MRS. MELVILLE.

Sensibility.

MRS. RIVERS.

I am amazed!

MRS. MELVILLE.

MRS. MELVILLE.

I once hardly could have believed I should wish a child of mine to want Sensibility, but I see in Isabella how much it tends to increase the unavoidable distresses of human life, even to *create* them where they are not; so that I really think had I another child to educate, I should labour as much as possible to suppress this pleasing, but unhappy quality.

MRS. RIVERS.

I must repeat, you amaze me!—What! Sensibility!—The first and best gift of Heaven—would you rob your child of *that*?—Not only is it the sweetest grace of youth, but the principal source of its virtues.—Can you conceive any great or good action which has ever been performed by a person wanting Sensibility? Did you ever hear of any really great character who wanted this endowment? Have

Have I then a right to rob my child of that which alone can lead to exalted virtue, and to the train of delight by which it is accompanied?—How sweetly, as well as truly, says a certain charming Authoress,

“ Cold and inert the mental powers would lie,
Without this quick’ning spark of Deity.
To draw the rich materials from the mine,
To bid the mass of intellect refine;
To melt the firm, to animate the cold,
And Heav’n’s own impress stamp on Nature’s gold;
To give immortal *Mind* its *firmest* tone,
Oh Sensibility!—is all thine own!”

MRS. MELVILLE.

I agree with you fully, my dear friend, as to the *graces* and *charms* of Sensibility; but allow me to differ from you a moment. Was not *Cato* a great character, yet had he sensibility who did not shed a tear over the body of his son, just slain in battle?

MRS. RIVERS.

Undoubtedly yes.—First we ought to consider the education which was given to

the Romans.—We ought to recollect that their country was the chief object of their love, and that they were taught to despise all considerations which interfered with their duty to that.—Thus when Cato saw the dead body of his son, he did not weep, because *true* Sensibility exalted his mind to the height of patriotism, which made him willingly yield his son a victim to Rome.—He wished also to encourage the sinking Romans, by making their lives less valuable in their eyes, when he, to whom they looked for example, could so cheerfully part with that life which was dearer to him than his own.—What but Sensibility could have awakened this high sense of duty, and heroic resolution?

MRS. MELVILLE.

But that is exactly what I complain of. Sensibility, at least the sensibility I am used to see, *enervates* and *weakens* the mind; it destroys this heroic resolution, this preference of duty to indulgence.

E

MRS.

MRS. RIVERS.

“The Sensibility you are used to see,” these words explain to me your meaning.

MRS. MELVILLE.

You think then there are two kinds of Sensibility?

MRS. RIVERS.

Undoubtedly.—Or rather I should say that which is commonly dignified with that charming name, is unworthy of it; and if you will allow me to say so, by what I have seen of Miss Melville’s, that is the Sensibility she possesses, though perhaps mixed and blended with the true mind. Let us refer again to the delightful Authoress I have already quoted, whose every line contains meaning and reason.

“’Tis not to mourn because a Sparrow dies,

“To rave in artificial extasies!”

I would have Sensibility a *spring* of *Action*.
I would have it directed to a generous,
firm line of Conduct. In short, it should
be

be *Principle refined and pointed*. I would have young people taught to treat every creature with mercy and kindness, but I would not have them waste their tenderness and affection on a set of Animals. I would have them anxious to relieve every-thing in distress, but I would not have them

Boast quick rapture trembling in their eye,
If from the Spider's web they save a Fly.

Far would I be from wishing them to have the word *Sensibility* continually in their mouths, tho' I would never for an instant have it quit their hearts. It ought to *animate*, not *deject* them; to *strengthen*, not *enervate* their minds.

MRS. MELVILLE.

You are perfectly right, my dear friend, but how shall we teach young people to draw the line?

MRS. RIVERS.

By not suffering them to pass it, without reprehension; by not praising them

for *feeling*, by not allowing them to exaggerate their *language*, which leads to that hateful exaggeration of Sentiment I so much dislike.—Accustomed to express themselves strongly, to say they “*love*,” they “*detest*”—they are in “*anguish*,” in “*extasy*,” they strive to make their feelings correspond with their words: if they succeed, their imaginations become inflamed and delusive; if they do not, they are perpetually affected and unnatural.--Let them ask themselves, whether they really *feel* what they *express*, when they say they *love* or *bate* any-thing; let them first consider whether it is worth *loving* or *bating*, and then whether they really *do* love or hate it: they will then not be so easily deceived *themselves*, which, I believe, generally is the case before they seek to deceive *others*.

MRS. MELVILLE.

I am sure you are right, and I shall
earnestly

earnestly press this knowledge of *herself* on Isabella.

MRS. RIVERS.

I have always done so with Cecilia; and I wish young people would consider how much more amiable, simple unaffected manners are, than that pompous pretence of feeling and tenderness of which some are so fond.

Enter MARTHA.

MARTHA.

The dinner is ready, Ma'am.

MRS. MELVILLE.

Very well, we are coming. (*They go out.*)

END OF THE FIRST PART.

PART THE SECOND.

Enter CECILIA and ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.

THIS room is cooler than the dining parlour.

CECILIA.

It is remarkably pleasant and quiet.

ISABELLA, (*sighing.*)

Come let us sit, I am wretchedly out of spirits.

CECILIA.

I saw with great concern that you appeared out of spirits at dinner, and that your mama looked uneasy at it.—What is the matter, are you not well?

ISABELLA.

Yes, well—that is tolerably well—but the sight of my poor Parrot this morning has made me quite unhappy.

CECILIA.

CECILIA.

But, my dear, you ought not to suffer it to do so!

ISABELLA.

Bless me! can I feel as I please?

CECILIA.

In a great measure.

ISABELLA.

I am glad you think so.—Then you are never unhappy I suppose, for I believe nobody would chuse to be so!

CECILIA.

Pardon me.—There are cases in which we must *feel* unhappy, whether we struggle against it or not: but do you not think much of our unhappiness depends on our indulging melancholy, or striving against it?

ISABELLA.

Perhaps it may, but why will you not allow the present to be one of the cases you mention?

CECILIA.

I cannot think it of consequence enough. It is true I pity the poor bird, and if I were attached to him, as I dare say you are, I should be extremely concerned, but still as my concern would do him no good, and as I had done all I could to relieve him, I should strive against it, and make myself easy.

ISABELLA.

But *I* cannot—it makes me unhappy.

CECILIA.

That is what it ought not to do.

ISABELLA.

Do you make no allowance for the difference of dispositions?

CECILIA.

Yes,—but I also believe we can greatly correct and alter our own.

ISABELLA.

And you think *I* need this correction?

CECILIA.

CECILIA.

You are not angry with me!

ISABELLA.

No—but

CECILIA.

Nay, that is unfair—we were speaking generally—you asked my sentiments, or I should not have given them; if I have offended you, I sincerely beg your pardon.

ISABELLA.

No, no, you have not offended me—yet I will own much less than what you have said would have offended me in some people; but you speak so sensibly, and with so much goodness, I love to hear you tho' it is to blame me.

CECILIA.

I did not mean to *blame you*: I could not think of taking that liberty.—Let us drop the subject.

E 5

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.

No, no, we will not drop it.—I shall think you are angry, if you do not tell me all you think.

CECILIA.

What would you have me tell you?

ISABELLA.

Whether I really, in your opinion, require the correction you talk of?

CECILIA.

I have not a right, on so short an acquaintance, to decide.

ISABELLA.

You will not tell me—but I beg of you to be sincere!

CECILIA.

Well then remember you have no right to be offended.—I *do* think you suffer your feelings to govern you too much.

ISABELLA.

Well I will not dispute the word *suffer*, since you say I might correct it, but tell me how?

CECILIA.

CECILIA.

Are *you* convinced the correction is necessary?

ISABELLA.

Perhaps not entirely.

CECILIA.

Permit me to ask you a few questions.

ISABELLA.

With all my heart.

CECILIA.

Suppose your mother, or any of your friends, were ill, what would you do?

ISABELLA.

I should be very much grieved!

CECILIA.

Of course—but should you attend to them yourself, or how should you act?

ISABELLA.

I should wish to attend them, but I fear I should be too unhappy!

CECILIA.

If you were yourself ill, how should you expect your mother to act?

ISABELLA.

Oh I know very well she would attend me constantly!

CECILIA.

Well, do you not believe she would feel a great deal?

ISABELLA.

Oh yes, I am sure of it!

CECILIA.

Should you not be very much distress'd, if, instead of attending you, she disturbed you by continual sighs and tears, and rendered herself so incapable of assisting as to be obliged to leave you to the care of servants?

ISABELLA.

Certainly!

CECILIA.

The inference is so obvious, I will leave you to draw it for yourself.—Only let me hint, if every-body felt as you say *you* do, and acted in consequence, what would become of those who are sick, or in danger?

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.

You are certainly right—but how am I to conquer this excessive feeling?

CECILIA.

Simply by not indulging it.—Perhaps your mind will sometimes turn itself from a suffering object; but do not heed it.—*Force* it to act.—Do not say “*I cannot*”—but *try*.—*Think* you can, and you will be able.

ISABELLA.

Do you think so?

CECILIA.

I am even sure of it.—I will give you an instance: I am myself extremely afraid of *Fire!* and used to tell my mama I believed, if my bed were on fire, I should be burnt for want of resolution to move. She took a great deal of pains to reason me out of this belief, which she foresaw might be so dangerous.—Last summer, when we were at my aunt's, I was one evening

evening in my own room, which joins the nursery, where her little girl was sleeping, the nursery maid was just gone down stairs, I smelt fire, and running into the nursery, saw that the cat had jumped on a table where the maid had placed a candle, and had beat the candle into the cradle where the baby was—the quilt was in a blaze!

ISABELLA.

Oh mercy!—what did you do!

CECILIA.

My first impulse was to run for help, but struck with the idea that the infant would be burnt or stifled before help could arrive, I said to myself “Oh mama, let me now remember your lessons!”—I flew to the cradle, snatched up a small carpet, and threw it into the cradle; it extinguished the flame: I then seized the child, and ran with her down stairs.—You may suppose that my mother and aunt thought me distracted; but when I explained to them
what

what had happened, I thought my aunt would never cease thanking and praising me.—She told me I had saved her from despair and distraction; that her child should be taught to love me as a second mother.—In short, I cannot repeat to you half she said, or describe the painful delight I felt in her gratitude and joy.

ISABELLA.

But did you not suffer from the fright?

CECILIA.

A little.—I felt sick and faint; mama gave me some drops, and I cried a good deal; after which I was quite well, and never can think myself grateful enough to Heaven, for giving me courage to rescue the poor infant!

ISABELLA.

Well, I *admire* you!—but I fear I should never be able to *imitate* you!

CECILIA.

Only give me your promise that you will try, and I am sure you will be able.

Enter

Enter MRS. MELVILLE and MRS. RIVERS.

MRS. RIVERS.

So, my dear girls, you have run away from us!—Indeed the dining parlour is so warm, that we were glad to quit it also.

ISABELLA.

It is very warm indeed, ma'am.

CECILIA, (*to Mrs. Melville.*)

I am afraid you are not well, ma'am?

MRS. MELVILLE.

Not very well indeed.

ISABELLA.

Oh, mama, what is the matter?

MRS. RIVERS.

Are you faint?—Sit down.

(*She places a chair, and Mrs. Melville sits down.*)

ISABELLA.

Speak to me, mama!—Oh, what shall I do!

CECILIA.

My dear, you alarm your mama; she
will

will be better presently; I will fetch some water.

(She runs out. Mrs. Rivers gives her salts to Mrs. Melville, who becomes more and more faint. Isabella runs about distractedly, and crying.)

MRS. RIVERS.

My dear Isabella, don't be so frighten'd! Open the window, and bathe your mother's forehead with this Hungary water.

ISABELLA.

Oh I cannot, indeed I cannot, I am so frighten'd!

MRS. RIVERS.

Silly girl, how can you be such a coward!
(Cecilia returns with water. Martha comes in; they sprinkle Mrs. Melville with water. Cecilia supports her. Isabella continues crying.)

MRS. RIVERS.

Isabella, I am quite ashamed of you—how can you be so childish!

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.

Oh, mama is dying, I am sure.

MRS. RIVERS.

Dying!—what nonsense!—she is even now recovering.—My dear friend, are you better?

MRS. MELVILLE.

Yes, I am better, I thank you.—My eyes are still dim.—Who is this supporting me?—My dear Isabella!—Dear child, do not be alarmed, I am better!

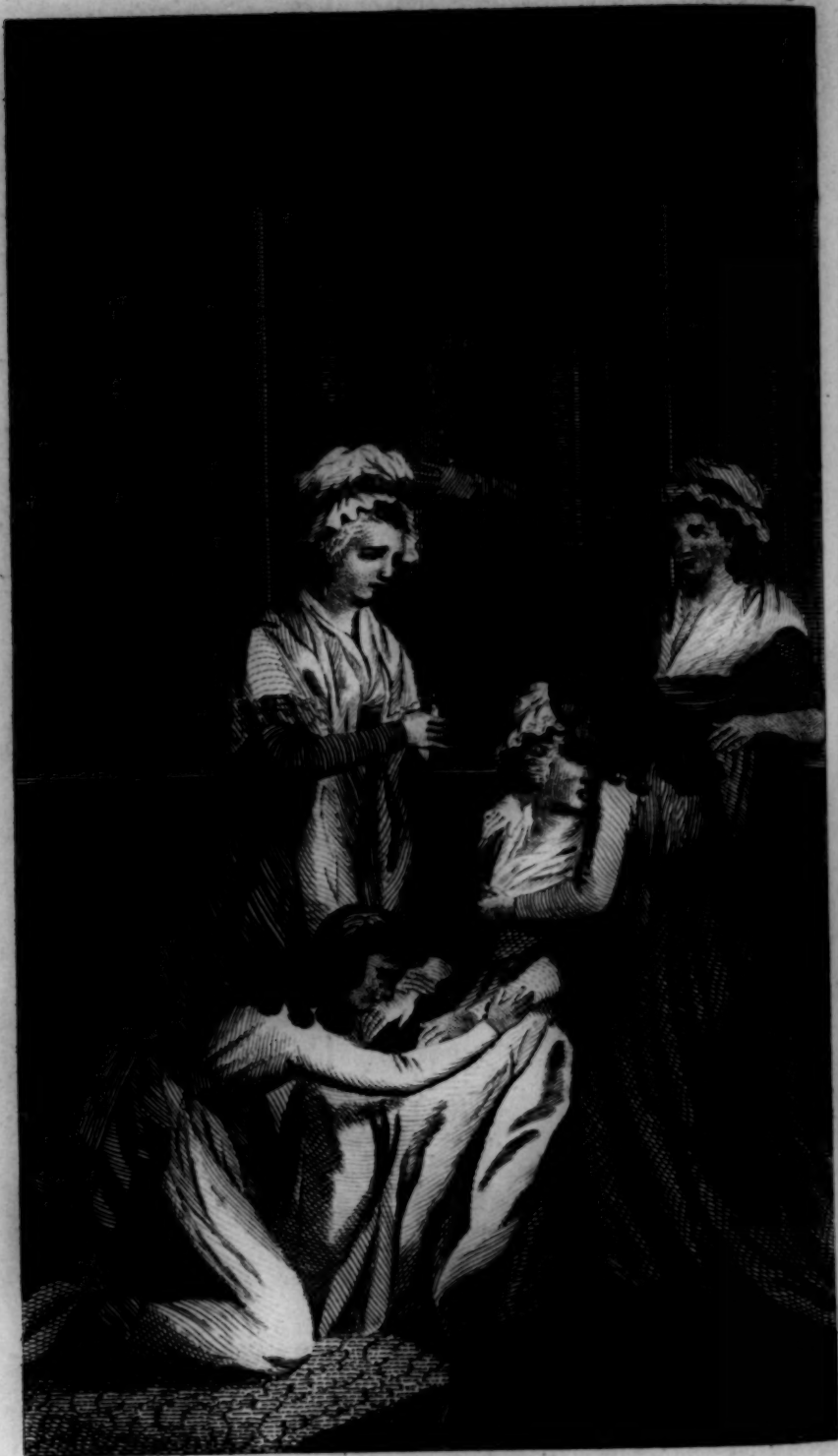
(Isabella advances. Cecilia makes signs to her to come forward.)

MARTHA.

Dear ma'am, we are all frighten'd, Miss Isabella is as bad as you almost!

MRS. MELVILLE, *(leaning her head on Cecilia.)*

Don't be frightened, my love; I am better indeed.—I ought to be well, when you are so attentive to me.—Ah! what happiness for a mother to be supported in the arms



Cecilia supporting M.^{rs} Melville.

arms of her child.—I feel your tears on my face, speak to me Isabella.

ISABELLA, (*falling on her knees before her mother, and kissing her hands.*)

Ah mama, I am here!

MRS. MELVILLE.

Who then is this?—Cecilia!—It is to you then that I am obliged for assistance! (*A short pause, during which Isabella appears much confused.*)—Thank you, my dear.—I am subject to these attacks in warm weather, but I am now well.

MRS. RIVERS.

My dear Mrs. Melville, had you not better go to your own room?

MRS. MELVILLE.

I will presently; you and Cecilia will have the goodness to assist me.

ISABELLA.

Ah mama, why do you not say, Isabella will assist me?

MRS. MELVILLE.

MRS. MELVILLE.

We naturally look for help towards those from whom we have received it.

ISABELLA.

Ah mama, it is true indeed I have not been so happy as to be of use to you, but can you believe I did not wish it?

MRS. MELVILLE.

We can only judge of the heart by the actions it produces.

CECILIA, (*eagerly.*)

Dear ma'am, if you could have seen Isabella's distress, her alarm—she is incapable.—Oh can you believe your child could neglect you!

MRS. MELVILLE.

Generous girl! how I love that amiable warmth.

ISABELLA.

Mother, my dearest mother, forgive me!

MRS. MELVILLE.

If you are conscious of no offence, why ask forgiveness?

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.

Can I think myself innocent, when you are displeased with me ?

MRS. RIVERS.

How amiable is that sentiment ! It must procure your pardon.—My dear friend, believe me, Isabella suffered exceedingly ; her distress alone caused that appearance of neglect you condemn.

MRS. MELVILLE.

If too much feeling, or too little, cause the same effect, ought they not to be equally condemned ?

MRS. RIVERS.

If not *equally*, *both* ought to be.—But this is not a time to argue.—You will increase your indisposition by talking, and at least Isabella cannot feel *your* displeasure *too* much.—Forgive her, I beg of you !

CECILIA.

Dearest madam, forgive Isabella.--Look at her ; can you see her distress, and not

pity her?—Her constitution is slight ; the alarm was too much for her.--Her extreme affection for you was the cause of it.

MRS. MELVILLE.

Rise, my dear girl, I forgive the apparent slight !

ISABELLA.

Oh believe, believe, it could not proceed from my heart !

MRS. MELVILLE, (*embracing her.*)

Let us speak of it no more, but correct and suppress in future, I beg of you, that excess of feeling, which renders you incapable of doing your duty.—Come, my dear friend, you will have the goodness to go with me into my own room.—I will lie down awhile.

ISABELLA.

Mama, will you not suffer me to assist you?

MRS. MELVILLE.

If I do not, my dear, it is not because I am still angry with you ; but because I

do

do not need your attendance: in less than an hour I dare say I shall be well enough to meet you at the tea-table.—This faintness has only been owing to the heat; I have felt it all day.

ISABELLA.

And yet you have not complained.

MRS. MELVILLE.

No, since complaining could not cool the air, and consequently could not relieve my faintness.—Stay here, my child, with Cecilia, and both of you recover yourselves before I return.

(Mrs. Melville, Mrs. Rivers, and Martha, go out.)

CECILIA, ISABELLA.

(Isabella sits down, and leans her head on her hand.)

CECILIA.

My dear, will you take a little hartshorn and water?

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.

No, thank you.

CECILIA.

Be easy, my dear girl, since your mama is quite reconciled to you!

ISABELLA.

Ah Cecilia, if I had but recollected your kind and wise counsels, I should not have incurred her displeasure!

CECILIA.

In future, you will, I doubt not, act otherwise.

ISABELLA.

I hope so!—Never let me again incur a pang so severe as that I felt when my mother spoke of the sweetness of being assisted by her child, when I had not been of the least service to her.—And again, when she said “You and Cecilia will assist me”—as if I were not there! as if, alas, but too justly, I were a useless, helpless being!

CECILIA.

CECILIA.

Let us drop these unpleasant ideas, and hope that the consequence will be a fixed resolution on your part to encourage fortitude and activity, and to repress enervating and excessive feeling.

ISABELLA.

It shall indeed; and still, dear Cecilia, counsel and advise me. Be as sincere as I have hitherto found you; be my monitor, my adviser, and my *advocate*.—Dear girl, (embracing her) how can I ever enough thank you for those generous tears you shed, when pleading for me to my mother!—My heart, at least, has for once elected a real friend!

CECILIA.

I hope so, but the same facility with which I was exalted to that character, might expose you to much deceit and treachery.—You see I use the privilege you give me.

F

ISABELLA.

ISABELLA.

Do so always, and assist me if you can, to root up my idle prejudices altogether, and to renounce, for ever, the exaggerated expressions and unnatural sentiments of that which you have convinced me is false SENSIBILITY.

Scene closes.

THE

T H E
LITTLE TRIFLER.

A D R A M A.

IN THREE PARTS.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. MILD MAY,
SOPHIA,
EUDOCIA, } HER DAUGHTERS.
LAURA,
MRS. CECIL, GOVERNESS TO THE MISS MILD MAYs.
RUTH SAUNDERS, A POOR WOMAN.
SALLY.

The Story of Melancthon affords a striking Lesson on the value of Time, which was, that whenever he made an Appointment, he always expected not only the Hour, but the Minute, should be fixed; that the Day might not run out in the Idleness of Suspense.

JOHNSON.

SCENE *a Room with Book-cases, Frames,
a Harpsichord, Globes, &c.*

Enter MRS. CECIL, SOPHIA, and EUDOCIA.

SOPHIA.

I FEEL so chearful this fine morning,
that I hope I shall get through my em-

F 2

ployments

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ployments comfortably before we go for our ride.

EUDOCIA.

Yes, and the fun is so enlivening, we shall enjoy our airing of all things.

MRS. CECIL.

To do that, you must all of you perform your tasks well.—As to Miss Mildmay, I need not remind her, she is always ready.

SOPHIA.

You are always too good to me, my dear governess.

EUDOCIA.

Not better than you deserve, Sophia, we are all ready to allow that.

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, yes, the praise of candour and affection belongs to you equally.—But
we

we lose time.—Where is Miss Laura?—Idling, I dare say. I never shall succeed in my endeavours to teach that child the value of those minutes she wastes so abominably!—Nothing but a concurrence of circumstances will make her aware of the necessity there is, if we would go through our duties properly, of being punctual. 'Tis past nine, she must know it, and yet she is not here.—Do, Miss Eudocia, ring the bell. (*Eudocia rings the bell, they draw a small table, and sit down to work.*)

Enter SALLY.

MRS. CECIL.

Sally, pray tell Miss Laura 'tis past nine; I want her here.

SALLY.

Yes, ma'am.

(*She goes out.*)

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EUDOCIA.

Don't you think Sally a very good girl, ma'am?

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, I do indeed. Your mama has had her in her service six years, all that time she has behaved unexceptionably. She was very young when she came hither, and had before been tolerably educated; therefore I do not object to your talking to her sometimes, though I strictly forbid your doing so to the other servants.

SOPHIA.

We are perfectly convinced of the propriety of that. Indeed I cannot conceive how any one can wish it, their language is so unpleasant; and can one expect either pleasure or improvement from those who have had no education.

MRS.

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MRS. CECIL.

Those must have a very bad taste who do.

LAURA *runs in*.

LAURA.

Dear ma'am, is it nine o'clock?

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, a full quarter after; what have you been doing?

LAURA.

Why, ma'am, I asked after breakfast what it was o'clock, and they said it wanted a quarter of nine, so I thought I would set one of my drawers in order, but I did not begin directly, and I fancy that made me so late.

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, most likely—your drawers generally require more than a quarter of an

F 4

hour

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hour to set them to rights, and even of that quarter it seems you trifled away part. If you would but consider whether it is possible to do what you undertake in the time you can spare to it, you would not be so often behind your time.—And how have you left your cloaths now?

LAURA.

Oh, ma'am, when Sally called me, I *push'd* them all into the drawer as well as I could.

EUDOCIA, (*laughing.*)

Push'd them!—yes, your things are generally pretty well *push'd*, as you call it!

LAURA.

You have nothing to do with that.

MRS. CECIL.

Come, come, leaving off talking, and get to work—but remember I *will* have your drawer set to rights before you go out.

LAURA.

LAURA.

Oh I shall have plenty of time to do that.

MRS. CECIL.

Aye!—that is exactly your way!—You always have plenty of time in *idea*, and none in *reality*; of course you are always *unpunctual*.

LAURA.

If I am, it is not a *great* fault.

SOPHIA.

Fye Laura!

MRS. CECIL.

Is it not a great fault?—There I differ from you.—It leads to very unpleasant consequences at least—often to very bad ones. In the first place, you trifle away a great deal of time: for instance, your sisters have been at work some minutes; of course their tasks will be done sooner, and they will have the more time for other

F 5 employ-

employments.—It is a chance if you are ready to go out with your mama: you have all your work to do; to read French, and to put your drawers in order.

LAURA.

Well, all that is *my* loss!

MRS. CECIL.

Your accent and manner are a little impertinent, but I will pass that over, as I wish, if possible, to convince you by reasoning.—Suppose then, when you are older, you should appoint a friend to meet you at any place, and because you forget, or over stay your time, she is disappointed, and has her trouble for nothing—That will be *her* loss, I think!

LAURA.

Yes; but it would not be of much consequence.

MRS. CECIL.

You are very slow to be convinced!—
Suppose

THE LITTLE TRIFLER.

Suppose her business is of consequence,
and cannot be delayed!

LAURA.

Oh but I should know that, and should
be sure to be there!

MRS. CECIL.

Very well! if you can all at once break
thro' a settled habit, you have greater
command of yourself than I give you
credit for.—You will see, and we shall
learn, if you do not regret the many mo-
ments you have lost in idle trifling.—
When do you mean to begin work?

*(Laura takes several pieces of work out
of her bag.)*

MRS. CECIL.

Why do you take out so much at once?
you cannot do it all!

LAURA.

Which should I do, ma'am?

MRS.

MRS. CECIL.

This is what you left on Saturday, on promise to do it to-day; and this is your task for this morning, which I *will* have done.

LAURA.

But there is so much !

MRS. CECIL.

Not so much as I have given your sisters !

LAURA.

But they are older !

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, and somewhat more industrious : there is not too much for you ; so no more disputing, but begin.

(Laura sits down by Sophia. After a short pause, she yawns ; then leans on Sophia's chair, and whispers to her. Sophia makes no answer.)

LAURA,

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LAURA, (*in a low voice.*)

Now *pray* do, Sophia!—You cannot think how much I shall be obliged to you.

SOPHIA.

Have done, Laura!

LAURA.

Hush, don't speak so loud!

SOPHIA.

I do not chuse to whisper!

MRS. CECIL.

Pray what are you doing, Miss Laura? Attend to your work, I beg of you; you are like all idle people, fond of disturbing others.

(*A short pause, during which they work.*

When Mrs. Cecil is not observing her,

Laura wraps her work round her

thread papers like a doll, and jogs

Eudocia.)

LAURA.

Eudocia, look, look, I say, is not it droll?

(*Eudocia*

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Eudocia looks up; tries to stifle a laugh, but cannot. Mrs. Cecil looks towards them. Laura snatches up her work.)

MRS. CECIL.

How now, young ladies?

EUDOCIA.

My stars, Laura, you are so ridiculous, you make me laugh!

LAURA, (*laughing.*)

I!—'Twas the thread-papers!

MRS. CECIL.

Oh to be sure!—Have done, I charge you.--(*Another pause, then Laura whispers Sophia.*)

SOPHIA.

Do pray be quiet, Laura, you are very teasing.

MRS. CECIL.

What is all this about?—Miss Mildmay, what is she saying?

SOPHIA.

THE LITTLE TRIFLER. 111

SOPHIA.

Asking me, ma'am, to tell her something I have refused to let her know twenty times already.

MRS. CECIL.

She is very impertinent.—I shall remove you, Miss Laura, if you torment your sister so.

LAURA.

Because it is so cross, ma'am, it cannot be a secret, only she chuses to make it one on purpose to teaze me.

MRS. CECIL.

That is *very* likely!—But no more of this.

LAURA.

Dear ma'am, it's something so very odd.

MRS. CECIL.

Hold your peace!

EUDOCIA.

EUDOCIA.

What does she want to know, Sophia?

LAURA.

I want to know what——

MRS. CECIL.

I insist on your not speaking.—You have all the faults of a Trifler, curious, impertinent, chattering.--I wish you could see how disagreeable you make yourself.

EUDOCIA.

Here comes mama.

(Enter MRS. MILD MAY.

(They rise.—The girls run and embrace their mother.)

MRS. MILD MAY.

Sit still, Mrs. Cecil.—My dear girls, how are you?

ALL.

Quite well, mama, thank ye—are you well?

MRS.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Yes; tho' a little late this morning.

MRS. CECIL.

You sat late last night, ma'am.

MRS. MIDMAY.

Yes, the pleasure of seeing my son detained me later than usual.--How do your pupils behave, Mrs. Cecil?

MRS. CECIL.

Vastly well, ma'am, except a little—

MRS. MILD MAY.

Laura, I suppose—you are conscious, I see!—I too have a complaint to make.

LAURA.

Dear mama!

MRS. MILD MAY.

Yes, I have indeed, but sit down to your works.

LAURA.

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LAURA.

Should I sit, mama, while you are speaking to me?

MRS. CECIL.

No, my dear, I shall excuse as much of your work as you would have done in the time.

MRS. MILD MAY.

As much as she *might* have done, my dear Mrs. Cecil; what she *would* have done is, I fancy, rather doubtful.

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, indeed, ma'am.

MRS. MILD MAY, (*sits down; Laura stands before her.*)

You look a little alarm'd, Laura, but I am not very angry with you, since I believe your fault proceeded as usual from want of thought.—Yesterday, at church, my dear, you behaved very ill.—In the first

first place, while we stood up, I saw your eyes wandering all over the church: in the next place, while we were sitting, you whisper'd to Eudocia, jogged her elbow, and tried to make her laugh.—Now, my dear, I beg you to consider how very improper all this is.—Do you know for what purpose we go to church?

LAURA.

Yes, mama, surely, to pray to God.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Well then, can you think such behaviour proper?

LAURA.

But it was not during the prayers.

MRS. MILD MAY.

True, but part was during the psalms, which are intended as immediate addresses to our Creator, of both praise and prayer; therefore we *stand* to shew our reverence and attention.—When we were sitting,
it

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it was to hear the lessons read; that is, selected parts of the holy scripture, the immediate word of God, and the rule by which we are to direct our life.—Even if the service had not been begun, or had been ended, to talk and laugh would have been highly improper.—It unfits the mind for serious duties, and implies a lightness and thoughtlessness, which ought not to be indulged or allowed in a place sacred to our maker.—Our Saviour shewed his disapprobation of any thing which might disturb the tranquillity and decency of the holy place, by driving from the Temple (the place of worship) at Jerusalem those whom human laws allowed to transact business there, saying, “It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.”—I am sure if you were in the King’s presence, you would not be so ill-bred as to laugh and whisper, when he was speaking to you, or allowing another to do so;
how

how much less then, when God speaks to you by his scriptures, ought you to behave irreverently ?

LAURA.

I am fully convinced, mama, I am much obliged to you for taking the trouble of instructing me ; and, I assure you, I will never behave so again.

EUDOCIA.

I thank you also, mama, for I never saw this matter so clearly before.—I knew it was wrong to talk at church, but sometimes I have forgotten it ; now I think nothing will ever tempt me to do so again.

MRS. MILD MAY.

I am always happy, my children, to be of service to you, and while I see you willing to be convinced and to amend, I am over-paid for any trouble I can be at in instructing you.—Laura, return to
your

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your work.—At one o'clock, you will all be ready to go out; I shall not wait a minute for any-body, unless Mrs. Cecil can give me a good reason for the delay. Sophia your brother will take you in his phaeton; our cold provisions are all packed up.—I hope to hear a good account of you all: remember, that if you would enjoy the ride, and the sight of the gardens we are to visit, you must behave well.—Good-bye.—Mrs. Cecil, a good morning to you.—I hope you will like our ride.

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, ma'am, I have no doubt of it; a good morning to you.

(Mrs. Mildmay goes out.)

LAURA.

Now, Mrs. Cecil, how much will you allow me, to leave of my work?

EUDOCIA.

That is Laura's first concern!

LAURA.

LAURA.

So it would be yours, if you had as much to do as I have.

EUDOCIA.

I *had* as much at first.

LAURA.

But mama has not been talking to you.

EUDOCIA.

No, because I behaved better yesterday than you did.

SOPHIA.

Eudocia, when my mother is satisfied with the atonement for a fault, it does not become us to mention it reproachfully.

LAURA.

Thank ye, Sophia, you seldom take my part, and Eudocia deserves a *good lecture* this time, however!

EUDOCIA.

EUDOCIA.

Then you think I do not *often* deserve one?

MRS. CECIL.

However that may be, you certainly *do* now.—Have done disputing, Eudocia, that is your principal fault; you have been wrong all the way now; you had, as your sister observed, no right, nor was it kind, to resume a subject your mama had done with; and to answer so sharply and so often, shews an inclination to quarrel, very unpleasant and improper.

EUDOCIA, (*after a short pause.*)

It is very true, I have been wrong. Laura, I beg your pardon.

LAURA.

Oh my dear, how good you are!—I am not angry!

SOPHIA.

How sweetly was that said!—How amiable is candour!

MRS.

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, indeed, I am pleased with Eudocia!

LAURA.

Well, nothing affects me like hearing any one say in that honest way, "I was wrong, I beg your pardon."—I never can help crying, and I feel so sorry, and so humble, and so pleased with them.—But in spite of all that, I never can prevail on myself to ask pardon; I feel so ashamed, and so afraid of being laughed at!

MRS. CECIL.

That is *false* shame.—No shame is just, but the shame of a bad or improper action; and as to being laughed at, the person who *can* laugh at another for doing as she ought, must be unable to taste the sweetness of virtue, and the *exaltation* of *humility*.—But go on with your work, Laura: I shall allow you to leave off,

G

when

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when you have done so much, (*measuring her work.*)—You have been sadly idle. Eudocia, you may now read: bring that little book of manuscripts your mama gave you on Saturday.

EUDOCIA.

Yes, ma'am.—(*She sits down by Mrs. Cecil; takes a small book, and reads.*)
 “Come ye who love to see what is beautiful—come who wish to enjoy what is sublime—come and I will direct your eyes to the bright Moon, which rides triumphantly on the bosom of Heaven. Is she not beautiful, when breaking thro’ the black clouds which surround her, she diffuses splendour around!—Is she not sublime when sinking beneath the sable veil, she just tinges with lucid silver its unequal edges!—Again she swells above the heavy vapour, and shines in perfect beauty.—So rises from the false imputations of malicious slander, the undiminished

lustre of true virtue. The machinations of evil men, the unavoidable concurrence of accident, may awhile overspread the beauty of a good name with heavy clouds, but its splendour shall return, and its enemies shall fly before it like the broken and disjointed track, which flies from the face of the Moon.—Comfort yourselves, then, ye sons of men: despair not, because darkness, or even the shadow of death, furrounds you.—Time shall make manifest the beauty of goodness, and its soft lustre shall diffuse a sweet and calm satisfaction into the bosoms of all who believed it.”

SOPHIA.

That is very pretty.

MRS. CECIL.

The imitation of Mrs. Barbauld's hymn, “Come, and I will shew you what is beautiful”—at the beginning of this little piece, is obvious; but though inferior to

that charming production, it is not without merit.—Read one more, Miss Eudocia.

(EUDOCIA *reads.*)

How swiftly does imagination wing her flight!—Ere an instant has rolled over our head she conveys us to the most distant quarter of the globe; she represents to our mind the most remote events!—Time and distance fade before her, and her way is as unmarked as it is swift. We set out with one idea, and without being sensible of the progressive change, we find ourselves meditating another.—Imagination then is like a voyager who, embarking on an immense river, is lulled by the sound of the rippling water into a soft repose: he awakes and finds himself in another country; the trees, the flowers, the whole face of nature is changed: perhaps he has in his slumber passed from the most gloomy scenes to the most enlivened, but he shudders in reflecting that he has
probably

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probably also passed a tremendous fall, or a lurking quicksand!—In like manner the mind, wrapt in contemplation, may perhaps touch on the confines of some forbidden idea, some false principle, or scheme of guilt.—Happy those who pass them without harm; who do not indulge in such imaginations, but, if they perceive them, start aside, and direct their course to a more desirable climate.”

MRS. CECIL.

Very well—that is sufficient.—* Maintenant, Mademoiselle Laure, apportez moi votre Telemaque.

LAURA.

Oui, Madame.—(*She rises, looks in the book-case, then says*) Oh dear, it is not here, 'tis up stairs!

* Now, Miss Laura, bring me your Telemachus.

LAURA.

Yes, ma'am.

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MRS. CECIL.

How came it up stairs ?

LAURA.

Mama desired to hear me read while she dress'd yesterday, and afterwards I took the book into my own room, and forgot to bring it down.

MRS. CECIL.

Well, make haste and fetch it; there is so much time lost !

LAURA.

Oh I shall be back in a minute.

(She runs out.)

MRS. CECIL.

What a careless child !

(Laura returns with the book; she sits down and reads.)

“ Narbal me regardoit avec étonnement, et il crut appercevoir en moi je ne sçai quoi de heureux qui vient des dons du Ciel, et qui n'est point dans le commun
des

des hommes : il étoit naturellement sincère et genereux ; il fut touché de mon malheur, et me parla avec une confiance, que les Dieux lui inspirèrent pour me sauver d'un grand peril, &c. &c.

MRS. CECIL.

That is well read ; now Miss Mildmay you will translate it.

(Laura returns to her work ; Sophia takes the book.)

“ Narbal regarded me with astonishment, and believed he perceived in me a certain expression of goodness, which is the gift of Heaven, and is not common among men. He was naturally sincere and generous ; he was touched with my misfortunes, and he spoke to me with a confidence which the Gods inspired, to save me from imminent danger.—Telemachus, said he to me, I neither do nor can doubt that which you tell me. The softness and virtue painted on your coun-

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tenance will not suffer me to suspect you; I even feel that the Gods whom I have always served love you, and decree that I shall regard you as my son. I will give you salutary counsels, and in return I only demand that you shall be secret.—Fear not, said I to him, that I shall find any difficulty in concealing those things which you confide to me. Though young, I am old in the habit of never revealing my own secrets, and still less the secrets of others. How have you been able, said he, in such extreme youth, to accustom yourself to secrecy: I shall be delighted to know by what means you have acquired that quality, which is the foundation of the wisest conduct, and without which all talents are useless? When Ulysses, I replied, departed for the siege of Troy, he took me on his knees, holding me in his arms, (as I have been told) and after he had kissed me tenderly, he used these words, tho' I could not understand them.

Oh!

Oh! my son, may the Gods never suffer me to see thee again ; rather let the fatal scissars cut the thread of thy days ere it be half formed, as the reaper cuts down with his sickle a tender flower as it begins to open ; may my enemies dash thee in pieces before the eyes of thy mother and myself, if thou art doomed one day to be corrupted and to abandon virtue !—Oh! my friends, continued he, I leave to you a son so dear: take care of his infancy. If you love me, banish from him pernicious flattery ; teach him how to conquer his passions, that he may be like a tender plant which men often bend in order to make it grow upright : above all, forget nothing which may render him just, benevolent, sincere, and faithful in keeping a secret : whoever is capable of lying, does not deserve to live ; and whoever knows not how to be silent, is unworthy to govern. I repeat these words exactly, because care was taken to recount them to me fre-

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quently, and that they sunk into the bottom of my heart."

MRS. CECIL.

Very well rendered indeed.

SOPHIA.

This is a charming passage!—One sees in the first part of it, how agreeable to all men is a candid open countenance, which can only be preserved by retaining Truth in the heart.

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, and the latter part is an excellent lesson.—When you are disposed to tease your sisters out of a secret, Laura, recollect this passage, and learn the necessity of a prudent reserve.

LAURA.

But Ulysses said, "whoever could not
"be silent was unworthy to govern," my
sisters are not going to govern.

MRS.

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MRS. CECIL.

I never saw a young lady more ingenious at finding *objections*. These words were addressed to a young prince, therefore the word *govern* is used, but secrecy is a quality equally necessary in all situations, besides, you may probably some time or other *govern a family*, though not a *kingdom*, and believe me, you would find yourself very ill qualified to do that if you told your servants, your neighbours, and whoever would hear you, all the concerns of your household, and every thing which came to your knowledge.— Have you done work, young ladies?— 'Tis past twelve.

SOPHIA.

I have.

EUDOCIA.

And I.

G 6

LAURA.

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LAURA.

I have a little bit.

MRS. CECIL.

You must have been very idle, for I gave you very little.—You must dress, and set your drawer in order, so make haste.

(Sophia and Eudocia rise, fold their work, and put it away.)

Enter MRS. MILD MAY.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Laura, what's the reason your poor squirrel has not been cleaned and fed?—I heard him very restless, looked at him, and found he had nothing to eat or drink.

LAURA.

Oh dear, mama, on Saturday I had not time, yesterday I could not do it, and this morning, before breakfast, I had so much to do.

MRS.

MRS. CECIL.

I told you then not to trifle so much time away, in putting on your cloaths. In the midst of dressing, you took a fancy of reading two old letters, which you found in one of your drawers, then in spite of my remonstrances you entirely new dressed your doll, and had only time to take half a turn in the garden, though your sisters and I walked a considerable time.

MRS. MILD MAY.

That is always the way. You will take improper times to do things. You have no regularity, no idea how much time it will take to accomplish such and such things.—When you had the squirrel, it was on promise to take care of it yourself; you shall not go out till he is fed.

LAURA.

But, mama, I have not quite done
work,

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work, I must put my drawer in order, and dress myself, I shall not be ready.—Mayn't Sally clean my squirrel's cage?

MRS. MILD MAY.

No, she shall not.—'Tis your own fault if you are not ready, and I will not indulge you in such idle ways.—Let me hear what you have done since breakfast?

LAURA.

Mama, I began putting my drawer to rights, which I had not time to finish: I have read French, and hemmed all this muslin.

MRS. MILD MAY.

And you, Eudocia.

EUDOCIA.

Mama, I made part of a paper-box, and wrote my journal in my pocket-book, before school hour; and since I have read, and worked this pattern of my frock.

MRS.

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MRS. MILD MAY.

There, Laura, and all that in exactly the same time you have had!

LAURA.

Indeed, mama, I will manage better another time!

MRS. MILD MAY.

Very well; at present, however, you must do all you have to do.

SOPHIA.

Mrs. Cecil, shall we dress?

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, if you please.

MRS. MILD MAY.

I am dressed, therefore, Mrs. Cecil, I will take care that Laura finishes her employments while you dress.

MRS. CECIL.

Thank you, ma'am.

LAURA.

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LAURA.

Dear Mrs. Cecil, excuse me this bit of work!

MRS. MILD MAY.

No, Mrs. Cecil, I beg you will not!

MRS. CECIL.

Indeed, ma'am, I am not at all disposed to do so, unless you should desire it.

(Mrs. Cecil, Sophia, and Eudocia, go out.

Mrs. Mildmay reads.—A pause.

LAURA.

Mama, I have done work.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Very well; go then, and do all you have undertaken, and, if you are ready, you shall go with me.

LAURA.

Mama, tell me what's o'clock?

MRS. MILD MAY.

Half past twelve.

LAURA.

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LAURA.

And you go at one.—Well, I think,
I shall be ready.

MRS. MILD MAY.

I think you will not.

(They go out.)

END OF THE FIRST PART.

PART

PART THE SECOND.

Enter MRS. MILD MAY, *meeting* Mrs.
CECIL, SOPHIA, *and* EUDOCIA.

MRS. MILD MAY.

WELL, Mrs. Cecil, are you ready?
Where's Laura?

MRS. CECIL.

Not ready, ma'am.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Then I shall not wait; she deserves to
be left behind, and 'tis now ten minutes
past one.

SOPHIA.

Mama, she will be ready in five
minutes.

MRS. MILD MAY.

No matter, it is already past the time
I had fixed; we are to be at home by
five,

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five, and we shall have barely time to see the gardens.—It is her own fault: let us go.

EUDOCIA.

Oh I am very sorry indeed Laura will not go!

Enter SALLY.

SALLY.

Ma'am, Miss Laura begs you will be good enough to wait ten minutes; she will be dressed in that time.

MRS. MILDMAV.

No, I will not; I have said I will not, and she knows I always keep my word. Come, Mrs. Cecil, come children. Sally, tell Laura to confine herself to this room and the garden, while we are gone; I will not have her running about among the servants.—Lay the cloth for her here.

(They go out.)

SALLY.

I am very sorry for poor Miss Laura,
she

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she will be so vexed!—But she is always past her time.—To-day, truly, she has been chattering to me instead of dressing, though she knew her mama would not wait. “Oh I have plenty of time, it is not near one!”—that is her way.—Oh here she comes.
(*Laura runs in.*)

LAURA.

Sally, do you know where my gloves are?—I am ready now!

SALLY.

Ah miss!

LAURA.

What?—Bless me!—Sure mama is not gone!

SALLY.

Indeed, miss, I am sorry to say she is.

LAURA.

You jest, I am sure!

SALLY.

No, truly miss, I should not take that liberty.

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liberty. Your mama would not wait a minute longer ; both Miss Mildmay and Miss Eudocia tried to prevail on her, but she said you knew she never broke her word.

LAURA, (*with tears in her eyes.*)

You may go, Sally.

SALLY.

Miss, your mama ordered me to tell you, she desired you to stay in this room.

LAURA.

Very well.

(*Sally goes out. Laura draws a chair, throws herself into it ; rises again, and walks impatiently about the room.*)

LAURA.

It is too bad, I declare !—To go without me ; and to order me to stay in this room.—What is the reason of that, I wonder.--And George is gone with them.

He

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He goes away to-morrow.--This last day, which I thought to have spent so pleasantly, to be so disappointed.—'Tis very cross in mama, I am sure.—(*She wipes her eyes.*) I am always to blame: "Laura did this"—"Laura did that"—Laura is always wrong.—(*She pauses.*) After all, I certainly might have been ready.—How did I *dare* say, mama was *cross*.—What! mama, who is always so kind, so indulgent, so equal in her sweetness of temper!—It was very wrong in me.—dear mama, though you cannot hear me, I ask your pardon.—Well, what shall I do while they are gone?—How tedious the time is.—(*A pause.*) Lord bless me, I wish I might walk in the garden.—Perhaps mama said I might: I will enquire.—(*She goes to the door, and calls*) Sally!—Sally! (*Sally comes in.*)

SALLY.

Did you call, miss?

LAURA.

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LAURA.

Yes.—Did mama say I might walk in the garden?

SALLY.

Yes, miss; I thought I had told you, this room and the garden.—My mistress said, you should not run about among the servants.

LAURA.

Oh that was the reason!—I am glad I know that.—Apropos, I wish I could find out this mighty secret of Sophia's.—Sally, do you know it?

SALLY.

What, miss?

LAURA.

Why, I'll tell you. About a month ago, mama gave Sophia two guineas, and told her to buy whatever she liked best with it. She gave one to Eudocia, and one to me. Eudocia bought a small
writing

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writing desk ; and I bought a squirrel's cage, and some flower seeds for my garden : but Sophia said she would wait awhile, and consider before she bought. Well, yesterday it came into my head that she had not bought any thing ; and I asked her what she should purchase with her two guineas.—She coloured a little, and said, “ Oh something I shall like.”—Mrs. Cecil smiled, and I have never been able to get a more direct answer from Sophia.—Now, Sally, do you know what she means to buy ?

SALLY.

Dear miss, is it likely I should know ?

LAURA.

No, but you *might* nevertheless.

SALLY.

And if I did, what advantage would it be to you to be told ?

LAURA.

LAURA.

Oh then you *do* know!—Ah ha!—
Come, my dear Sally, tell me, I pray you!

SALLY.

I did not say I knew, miss.

LAURA.

Oh, but I am sure of it.—Pray tell me.

SALLY.

Fye, miss!—Consider, if I did know,
your sister must have told me in con-
fidence; and do you think I would betray
her?—Oh no, my good mistress has taught
me better!

LAURA.

Well, you know, however; so she has
determined on something, that is one step
gained.—I shall soon guess what!

SALLY.

But, Miss Laura, who told you I knew?

H

LAURA.

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LAURA.

Who?—yourself!

SALLY.

I!—that I could not!—I said *if*, but it was only supposing!

LAURA.

What then you don't know!

SALLY, (*laughing.*)

That you should really fancy Miss Mildmay had told me!--Surely she would have to do you first!

LAURA.

No, no, she would not.

SALLY.

Why, miss?

LAURA.

Because she thinks I should tell.

SALLY.

Then you believe she thinks I would not?

LAURA.

LAURA.

I suppose so!

SALLY.

You pay me a great compliment, miss; which I will try to deserve.

LAURA.

Well, I cannot tell whether you know or not, but I have not told you all.—Mrs. Cecil and Sophia have risen half an hour earlier than common this last fortnight, and I wish I knew what for; I never could find out how they had employed themselves.

SALLY.

Well, miss, if I might venture to speak, I should say it was not worth taking so much trouble to know.

LAURA.

If I think it is, that's enough.—I do not ask your advice.

H 2

SALLY.

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SALLY.

I beg your pardon, miss.

LAURA.

You may go. (*Sally goes out.*)

LAURA.

Let me consider!—What, can Sophia want to purchase books?—She has plenty, and mama is always buying for her.—A box of colours.—She has one.—New music—perhaps—but why make a secret of it?—Ah!—a locket of mama's hair! That must be it!—I dare say it is very pretty, and she means to surprise us with it, I suppose!—But then what have Mrs. Cecil and Sophia been doing in the morning?—Oh, perhaps, they are painting a *device* for it.—Yes, yes, that is it!

Enter SALLY.

SALLY.

Miss, there is a woman below stairs, in great distress; she is very poor, and she begs to see you.

LAURA.

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LAURA.

Well, shew her up; I will speak to her here.

SALLY.

Yes, miss. (*Sally goes out.*)

LAURA.

What shall I be able to do for her, I have but half a crown, but I can speak to mama.

Enter SALLY, and RUTH SAUNDERS.

SALLY.

That is Miss Laura.

LAURA.

Come in, good woman.

(*Sally goes out.—Ruth curtsies, and comes a little forward.*)

LAURA.

What can I do for you?

RUTH.

Miss, I came to beg some relief from my lady, but your servants tell me she is

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not at home, so I made bold to ask leave to speak to you, miss.

LAURA.

Very well; what can I do to serve you?

RUTH.

Alasaday, my young lady, I am grievous poor; I am a widow, with three children, the eldest of 'em is out at service, but the two little ones are too young to go out: my old mother lives with us; she is helpless, and you may think, miss, I find it hard to keep so many with the work of my own hands.—In the summer, I work in the fields: in the winter, I spin; and my children help me as well as they can. For two years, that my husband has been dead, we have done pretty well, 'till this last winter.

LAURA.

What happened then?

RUTH.

Alas, miss! in the autumn, I was so unhappy

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happy as to get an ague, which hindered my working a great deal; my children could do but little; they began to get dirty and ragged; it cut me to the heart to see them so, and not be able to help them!—To compleat my misfortune, a dog got into my little garden, and killed my two hens, whose eggs used to furnish us with a sure penny. Things went from bad to worse; I was fain to run in debt to my landlord, and tho' now the summer is coming on, and I am better, I hope I should be able to pay him; the cruel man declares he will seize for rent to-morrow morning.

LAURA.

What is *seizing for rent*?

RUTH.

Ah, miss! he will take all our little cloaths and furniture, and the very beds we lye on, my poor old mother's and all, to sell them, and pay himself.

H 4

LAURA.

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LAURA.

Can he be so cruel?—Is he poor?

RUTH.

No, miss, he has four hundred pounds a year, and only himself and his wife to keep.—What will become of my poor children, and my mother!—At seventy years old; must she be turned out to starve?

LAURA, (*eagerly.*)

No, no, she shall not—be easy—I promise you, she shall not.—Poor, good woman, how I pity you—but what do you owe this unfeeling wretch?

RUTH.

Oh, good young lady, a great deal!

LAURA.

But how much?

RUTH.

Thirty shillings, for half a year's rent.

LAURA.

LAURA.

Oh how unfortunate I am!—If I had not spent my guinea, I should have had almost enough; and perhaps he would have waited awhile.

RUTH.

Ah, miss, you are very good!—but don't think I came here to beg my lady to pay for me; no, indeed, miss, I only thought if she would speak to my landlord, he would may-be wait a little; and indeed I hope I shall pay him every farthing.

LAURA.

I am sure mama will do that, and perhaps more. I will speak to her for you, good woman; make yourself easy, I will do all I can for you.

RUTH.

Thank you a thousand times, good young lady; we shall all pray for, and

H 5

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bleſs you. I have often ſeen your two ſiſters walking with Madam Cecil, and I have thought when Miſs Mildmay looked ſo kindly on my poor little girls, while they opened the gate for her, and ſaid with her ſweet voice, “Poor children, there’s a penny for you.”—I have thought, if ſhe did but know how wretched we were, ſhe would ſpeak to my lady for us; but I had not the heart to tell her, ’till now; things getting ſo bad, I thought I would try at leaſt.

LAURA.

You did very right.—Call again at ſix o’clock; I will ſee you, and before that I will ſpeak to mama, you may depend on it.—In the mean time, I will give you this half crown; I have no more.

RUTH.

No, miſs, I thank you, I will not rob you; you will do all for me in ſpeaking to your mama.—She is ſo good, ſhe deſerves

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serves to have good children, and she is rewarded!

LAURA.

But I insist on your taking this money;
I wish it was more.

RUTH.

It does not become me to refuse your
favors.

LAURA.

Take it, buy something with it for your
mother.—Good woman, I love you for
being so kind to her! (*She calls*) Sally!

(*Enter Sally.*)

Take this good woman with you, and
give her something to eat; mama will not
object to that.

SALLY.

No, miss, I am sure.

LAURA.

And when she comes again, let me
know.—A good day to you.—Oh, tell
me your name?

H 6

RUTH.

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RUTH.

Ruth Saunders, miss.

LAURA.

Very well, I shall remember.

RUTH.

Your servant, miss, a thousand thanks.

(Sally and Ruth go out.)

LAURA.

Well, I shall not regret being left at home, since it has been the cause of my seeing this poor woman.

(Sally comes in.)

Do you know that woman, Sally?

SALLY.

Yes, miss, I have seen her often; she is very poor.

LAURA.

So I hear—but why I wonder did she never come hither before?

SALLY.

Ah, miss! 'tis very hard to beg; people who have been used to keep themselves by

by their own industry, are ashamed and afraid to ask relief.

LAURA.

Ashamed, perhaps; but why *afraid*?

SALLY.

Because, miss, so many gentlefolks are cross and hard-hearted; and one says—"Where did you learn all that history," and another says, "Ah, a sad story, if it is true!"

LAURA.

But that is abominable; if we don't chuse to give, we need not *insult* the poor creature who begs from us.

SALLY.

Very true, miss, but too many don't think of that; they forget that a beggar has any feeling. I once saw a poor man colour like scarlet, and his eyes sparkle with anger, at a gentleman, who said he was an impostor; but, poor wretch, he recol-

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recollected himself, put his hand on his bosom, sighed and passed on.--I gave him a trifle; he bowed, and I saw the tears in his eyes; he did not speak.--Poor creature, truly he was cut to the heart.

LAURA.

You are a good girl, Sally—but tell me what you know of this poor woman?

SALLY.

Why, miss, she lives in a little cottage just at the end of the village, and keeps it very neat, when she is well; she has two pretty children, and her mother (a good old woman) lives with her: the old woman is lame, but has all her senses, and when dame Saunders was so ill, the poor old woman used to cry, and the little girls, thinking to comfort her, said, “Don’t cry grandmother, I will feed you, and put on your clean cap for you.”

LAURA.

LAURA.

Poor little dears!—how did you know this, Sally?

SALLY.

Oh I heard them one day, miss; when I was walking by the house, I saw the poor woman standing at the door; she look'd sickly, so I asked her a few questions, and found the ague was off that day, and she was crept to the door for a little air.

LAURA.

And when was this?

SALLY.

About a month ago, miss.

LAURA.

And why did you not tell mama?

SALLY.

I did, miss, and my mistress ordered cook to send her some broth twice or three times, and Miss Sophia sent her a shilling.

LAURA.

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LAURA.

I never heard of that.

SALLY.

No, miss, because Miss Sophia never tells the good she does.

LAURA.

That is right, but I wonder I don't hear of it.—Indeed, I never see any poor people; they don't come here, I fancy?

SALLY.

No, miss, your governess and sisters find them out when they walk of a morning before breakfast.

LAURA.

That may be, for I don't know how, I seldom have time to walk of a morning. Well, I will walk in the garden, and then learn my grammar-task; then, for once, I shall be beforehand.—Afterwards I will dine.—You will lay the cloth, Sally.

SALLY.

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SALLY.

Yes, miss.

(Laura goes out.)

SALLY, *(putting the room in order.)*

Miss Laura is very good; she has an excellent heart, but she is so light-headed and careless; 'tis a great pity, and I hope she will break herself of it in time; no doubt she will, for she has very good sense. Well, this room will do now.

(She goes out.)

END OF THE SECOND PART.

PART

PART THE THIRD.

MRS. MILD MAY, MRS. CECIL, SOPHIA,
EUDOCIA, *taking off their Cloaks and
Hats, which they give to SALLY.*

MRS. MILD MAY.

WHERE is Laura, Sally?

SALLY.

Ma'am, she is walking in the garden.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Has she dined?

SALLY.

Yes, ma'am.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Well, call her hither directly.

(Sally goes out.)

MRS. CECIL.

We have had a delightful day indeed.

SOPHIA.

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SOPHIA.

Very charming; and our little hasty dinner I enjoyed wonderfully.

MRS. MILD MAY.

I never ate with better appetite in my life, than in the snug little cottage George found out for us.

EUDOCIA.

I only wished for Laura.

SOPHIA.

That indeed was only wanting to make our party complete.

Enter LAURA.

LAURA.

Oh, mama, are you returned; I did not expect you quite so soon.

MRS. MIDMAY.

'Tis past five; but, Laura, your brother has not ordered his phaeton from the door, having prevailed on me to suffer you to take a little ride with him.

LAURA.

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LAURA.

And may I go, mama?

MRS. MILD MAY.

Yes, if you have behaved well since we have been gone.

LAURA.

Yes indeed, mama, I have only been in this room and the garden, and I have learned my grammar-task.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Well, go then.

LAURA.

Yes, mama, thank you! thank you!—

(She runs a few steps; then returns, and whispers Sophia.)

SOPHIA.

Pshaw, nonsense!

LAURA.

Aye, but I have indeed.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Come, come, Laura, get your hat, and be gone; your brother waits.

LAURA.

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LAURA.

Yes, mama—Good bye—Good bye,
Mrs. Cecil, Sophia, Eudocia, your most
obedient. *(She runs out.)*

MRS. MILD MAY.

What did she say to you, Sophia?

SOPHIA.

That she had discovered my secret,
mama.

MRS. MILD MAY.

What does she mean?

SOPHIA.

You know, mama, how I have disposed
of the two guineas you were so good as
to give me, and Laura has been teasing
me since yesterday to know what I mean
to buy: I refused to tell her, and she
fancies she has guess'd it.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Silly child, how light her head is!

SOPHIA.

SOPHIA.

But perhaps she really knows.—She may have learned from Sally, who bought my materials, and even assisted in the work.

MRS. CECIL.

No, I believe Sally is perfectly faithful.

MRS. MILD MAY.

I believe so too.—We will ask her presently, if Laura has been questioning her.—But why did you so much object to Laura's knowing it, my dear?

SOPHIA.

Because, mama, Laura can no more keep a secret, than she can let any one else keep it in peace, and I know she would have told every-body she had met with; which, for many reasons, I wish'd to avoid.

MRS. MILD MAY.

It is very true, that those who are extremely curious, are generally unable to

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keep a secret, because it gratifies their self-importance, to shew that *they* know more than *others*, and because they hope to obtain new secrets, in return for those they tell: not considering, that a wise person will never place confidence in one who has abused the same trust from another.

MRS. CECIL.

There is nothing, I think, on which young people ought to be more scrupulous than on the subject of Confidence.—Let them not be over-fond of seeking a trust, which generally brings with it anxiety and care; but if by any accident, or any necessity, they find themselves in possession of a secret, they ought, with extreme delicacy and caution, to preserve a trust so sacred.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Most surely.—And the limits of Confidence are very strict.—It is not *only*
what

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what our friends say, prefaced by "*I beg you will not tell this,*" which we ought to consider as *confided* to us. Every thing which we can suppose they would not *wish* revealed, we ought to consider as told in confidence. Having once *confided* in a person, we do not say every minute, "*don't mention that.*"—We suppose their own prudence will teach them what ought to be kept secret; and *every thing* is told in confidence which passes between friends, either relating to their situations, sentiments, or opinions; often, indeed, when referring to these circumstances in others.

EUDOCIA.

Mama, I have heard people say, that we ought not to tell to one friend what another has told us.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Certainly not. The person who *confides* in *you* may not have an equally good
opinion

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opinion of your friend, or circumstances may render it very improper to entrust *her*. You may not be able to judge of these circumstances; therefore you ought to be as reserved to her as to the rest of the world: besides, *she* also might have a *friend*, to whom she might not scruple to tell the secret; that friend another, and so on without any bound.

EUDOCIA.

I see that very clearly.—But suppose I should know the person who entrusts me is also very intimate with my friend, and loves her, might I not then talk about the affair with her?

MRS. MILD MAY.

No, not without leave from the person who entrusts you; if she chuses to tell this third person, she *can*; if not, you may be sure she has some reason against it. I lately read a story exactly in point.—When Gen. Monk projected the Restoration of Charles the II^d, he maintained

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the strictest reserve on the subject, even to his friends.—He sent, however, for his brother, Dr. Monk, intending to confide his plan to him, and even giving him some hints respecting it. — When Dr. Monk arrived, while waiting for admission to the General, he entered into conversation with the General's Chaplain, in whom he knew he confided, and talked with him on the plan.—When he was admitted to his brother, the General asked him, if he had mentioned the subject to any one?—"To nobody," said the Doctor, "but to your Chaplain, whom I know you trust."—The General immediately changed countenance, dropped the discourse, and soon after sent his brother away; not chusing to trust a man who had talked on a subject of so much consequence to another, even tho' he would himself have trusted him*. A proof of his wisdom; for surely Dr. Monk had evidently shewed a want of delicacy in his sentiments, which ren-

* See Hume's History of England.

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dered him unfit to have the care of a plan so important!

SOPHIA.

I admire the General's conduct extremely.

MRS. CECIL.

He was undoubtedly right. The faculty of keeping a secret is highly necessary, yet rarely possessed. I made Laura remark that admirable passage in Telemachus to-day, because I remember the effect it had on myself. † Always fond of reading, Telemachus fell early into my hands: I was not above eight years old when that passage struck me; I reflected on it, and it has influenced my conduct ever since. Such indeed has been the constant advantage I have derived from books.—My mother died young; and my father, encumbered with the care of a family, left us in great measure to educate ourselves.

† This is absolutely fact, of a child well known to the Author.

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I was naturally very passionate, very idle, fond of beginning every thing, and ending nothing; but with a constant fondness for reading, which in the end supplied to me the place of an instructor.—The same author, I have always loved so much, says in another place *, “Heureux ceux qui se divertissent en s'instruisant, et qui se plaisent à cultiver leur esprit par les sciences! En quelque endroit que la fortune ennemie les jette, ils portent toujours avec eux de quoi s'entretenir. Et l'ennui, qui devore les autres hommes au milieu même des délices, est inconnu à ceux qui savent s'occuper par quelque lecture. Heureux ceux qui aiment à lire.”—When I saw any very amiable character repre-

* Happy those who are amused by Instruction, and take delight in cultivating their minds by Science. Into whatever situation unkind Fortune may cast them, they carry always with them the means of conversation. And that fatiguing Idleness, which devours so many, even in the midst of Pleasure, is unknown to them who know how to employ themselves in reading.—Happy those who love to read!”

sented in my books, I considered whether I *had* or *wanted* the qualities I admired so much. This was often a most unpleasant task, but I obliged myself to persevere in the enquiry; and having decided, tried to act accordingly.—When I read of any disagreeable character, and my heart told me I had its faults, I did not drive the conviction from me, but tried to correct myself.

MRS. MILD MAY.

An admirable example, and well worthy of being followed by those young people whose parents are either dead, or so engaged in business, as not to be able to attend to them: such young people would do well to observe the convictions of their own heart, and reason, and follow them, not refuse to listen to them.

EUDOCIA.

I have often heard people say, it is of no use to *read* without *reflection*; but I never quite understood what was meant by re-

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fection before. However, we are very happy in having a mother and governess so well able to instruct us.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Very true, you have great advantages; but that does not render reflection less necessary to you: without it, our precepts will be soon forgotten; and when you come to act for yourself, you will look round for those rules by which indeed you have been guided, but which you have neglected to implant in your heart; and missing them, you will no more know how to act in the world, than a man to find his way thro' a wood, which he had often seen at a distance, but whose particular situation he had neglected to mark.

Enter SALLY.

SALLY.

Pray, ma'am, is Miss Laura here?

MRS. MILD MAY.

No, Sally, she is gone out with her brother.—Why; do you want her?

SALLY.

SALLY.

Ma'am, there is a poor woman below, who came while you were out: she saw Miss Laura, who desired her to call again at six o'clock.—It is six o'clock now.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Yes, but Laura has surely forgotten the appointment!—Idle child!—she will never learn to be punctual.—Where is the woman? I will see her.

SALLY.

She is down stairs, ma'am. It is Dame Saunders.

SOPHIA.

Indeed!—then perhaps—but she knew nothing of it; so Laura could not learn from her.

MRS. MILD MAY.

What is it the woman for whom your gift was intended?

SOPHIA.

Yes, mama.

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MRS. MILD MAY.

Sally, did Laura question you about the purchase Miss Mildmay meant to make with her two guineas?

SALLY.

Yes, ma'am, but I told her nothing; indeed, she does not know that I know any thing about it.

MRS. MILD MAY.

That is right.—Come with me, Sophia; we will talk to the poor woman.

(*Mrs. Mildmay, Sophia, and Sally, go out.*)

MRS. CECIL, EUDOCIA.

MRS. CECIL.

How shameful for Laura to have neglected an appointment; on which, probably, the peace and happiness of this poor woman depended!—And to have been surpassed by her servant in faithfulness and secrecy!—All her faults proceed from carelessness, inattention, and want of punctuality.

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tuality.—Great vices, as well as great virtues, are rare ; but it is those errors, which seem at first trifling, but which grow upon us by degrees, of which we ought principally to beware.

EUDOCIA.

But, Mrs. Cecil, Laura is so young.

MRS. CECIL.

Yes, she is young ; but, with the advantages she has, she ought to know better : however, she has a good heart, and understanding ; and, I hope, she will correct herself.

EUDOCIA.

Oh yes, I hope so ! (*A short pause, then*)

(*Enter SOPHIA.*)

SOPHIA.

Oh, Mrs. Cecil, mama has rendered this poor woman *so* happy !—She has been in the greatest distress about her rent : mama has given her money to pay it, and money to buy food and cloaths. I have

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desired her to wait, while Sally fetches down the box I design for her.—Will you go with me, and give it to her?

MRS. CECIL.

With all my heart.

EUDOCIA.

Pray, sister, let me go also.

SOPHIA.

My dear, I should be happy to do so; but I wish very much you would be kind enough to stay in this room. Laura will be at home in a few minutes; if she finds no one here, she will follow us; and mama is determined to punish her, for neglecting this poor woman, by leaving her in doubt whether she has been here or not.

EUDOCIA.

Very well—I will call with you, then, to-morrow.

SOPHIA.

If you please; you oblige me extremely by this compliance.—Only think, Laura
had

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had promised Ruth Saunders to represent her situation to mama, and to give her the answer at six o'clock. She forgot all that!—but she gave her all the money she had; and Ruth said, behaved so kindly to her, as to make her quite happy.

MRS. CECIL.

How capable she is of behaving well, if she does but think!

(Mrs. Cecil, and Sophia, go out.)

EUDOCIA.

It is very true, indeed, that a habit of carelessness injures one extremely.--Laura this morning could not believe she should ever neglect an appointment of consequence.—Oh here she comes!

Enter LAURA.

LAURA.

So, Eudocia!—Where are mama and Mrs. Cecil; and Sophia, I don't see her either?—We have had a charming ride! My brother was very good to take me

out, and he has been telling me such delightful things about the fights in London; he promises to ask mama to let me go next autumn, and see them.—Shall you not wish me to go, Eudocia?

EUDOCIA.

To be sure; why do you think I would not?

LAURA.

Oh, because you looked so grave.

EUDOCIA.

Did I look grave?

LAURA.

Yes, I think so.—Have you drank tea?

EUDOCIA.

No; of course we should wait for my brother.

LAURA, (*in a jesting tone.*)

And for *me*, I hope you think I am of consequence enough to be waited for!

EUDOCIA, (*smiling.*)

What do *you* think?

LAURA.

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LAURA.

Ah you fly girl!—I know what you mean: 'tis true, mama did not think so this morning.

EUDOCIA.

I assure you, we all wished for you.

LAURA.

Oh I don't doubt it at all. I shall be more punctual another time; for tho' I liked my ride, it did not make amends for losing so much pleasure.--And George must go to-morrow: he says it will be a month before he comes again.—How good he is; how I love him!

EUDOCIA.

How we all love him!—He is so attentive to us all!—Oh here comes Sophia.

Enter SOPHIA.

EUDOCIA.

Sophia, what are you come already?

SOPHIA.

Yes, I have been extremely delighted!

EUDOCIA.

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EUDOCIA.

Was she pleased?

SOPHIA.

Oh you never saw any thing so happy!

LAURA.

So! so!—More secrets!—Ah ha, Sophia!—I have found out the *last* however!—Another time, I hope, you will trust *me*!

SOPHIA.

Not the sooner because I find you curious, and prying into what I wish to hide from you.

LAURA.

Well, but my little Sophia, my dear sweet Sophia, don't be angry; you know I could not help guessing!

SOPHIA.

You guess'd, did you?

LAURA.

Yes, I guess'd: well, Sophia, is it very beautiful?

SOPHIA.

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SOPHIA.

Oh, very beautiful, if one did but know what you meant.

LAURA.

You don't then, I suppose?—Is the *device* handsome?

SOPHIA.

The *device*!—What nonsense!

LAURA.

What, then, I suppose you will not own you have purchased a locket, with mama's hair?

SOPHIA.

You have a fine guess, indeed!

LAURA.

A true one, I fancy?

SOPHIA.

For once, you ~~are~~ entirely mistaken.

LAURA.

What can it be then!—Now, Sophia, do tell me.

SOPHIA.

SOPHIA.

Perhaps.

LAURA.

Oh do, pray do; indeed I will not tell.

SOPHIA.

I wish I had more reason to trust your promises; however, 'tis no longer a secret, so, if you wish it, I will tell you.

LAURA.

Oh yes, yes, make haste, Sophia, make haste!

SOPHIA.

You must know then, that, during the winter, I observed two pretty little girls, in the village, almost without cloaths; I pitied them very much, and wished I could relieve them. I began by saving all I could out of my allowance, and had already some shillings in advance, when mama gave me the two guineas: with her leave, I laid it out entirely in cloaths for the two little girls, and their mother, of whose distress I heard sad accounts.—

Mrs.

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Mrs. Cecil, Sally, and I, have been hard at work in making these cloaths, whenever we could find time, and all is now finished.

LAURA.

So, then, Sally knew!

SOPHIA.

Yes.

LAURA.

She would not tell!

SOPHIA.

What, you tried to make her?

LAURA.

I asked her—a little.

SOPHIA.

Fye, Laura!—You must have supposed she knew in confidence, if she knew at all! Only think what a shame, that your servant should know better how to act with respect to secrecy than you.

LAURA.

Well, that is true; but, Sophia, who are these little girls?

SOPHIA.

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SOPHIA.

Their mother's name is Ruth Saunders.

LAURA.

Ruth Saunders!—Oh goodness!—Is it
six o'clock?

SOPHIA.

Six!—'tis almost seven!

LAURA.

Oh, where is mama!—Let me see her
directly!—Where is Sally?

SOPHIA.

What is the matter?

EUDOCIA.

Dear Laura.

SOPHIA, (*aside to her.*)

Hush.—What's the matter, Laura?

LAURA.

Oh, don't ask me!—I am ashamed of
myself; tell me where is mama.

SOPHIA.

Mama is busy; you cannot see her.

LAURA.

Oh, I must, I must!—Sally! Sally.

(*She runs to ring the bell.*)

SOPHIA.

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SOPHIA.

Oh, Eudocia, how I feel for her!

EUDOCIA.

I can hardly bear to see her so unhappy.

SOPHIA.

Mama has commanded silence!

LAURA.

Sally! Sally!—why don't you come.

(Sally runs in.)

SALLY.

Miss!—Bless me, what's the matter?

LAURA.

Sally, has Ruth Saunders been here?

SALLY.

Yes, miss.

LAURA.

Without seeing me!—What must she think of me!—It is almost dark too!—I shall not be able to see her to-night, and to-morrow!—Oh, poor creature, how un-

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unhappy she is.—But if I can see mama, it may not be yet too late!—Dear Sophia, if you have any love for me, ask mama to let me see her!—I have something of great consequence to say.

SOPHIA.

Indeed, my dear girl, it grieves me to refuse you, but mama has forbidden me to interrupt her.

LAURA.

How can you be so unkind!—Indeed it is very cruel, and you seem not to feel for me.

SOPHIA.

Believe me, my dear, I feel for you very much.

LAURA.

Why then will you not intercede for me?

SOPHIA.

I have told you already, that mama

LAURA.

Oh mama would hear me, if she knew
—but how we lose time!—It will be dark,
and

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and I shall be too late.—Eudocia will *you* ask mama to let me see her?

EUDOCIA.

I hear her coming.

LAURA.

Oh then I may still succeed!

Enter MRS. MILD MAY, and MRS. CECIL.

LAURA, (*running to Mrs. Mildmay.*)

Mama, dear mama, will you have the goodness to hear me!

MRS. MILD MAY.

What would you say?—Why this extreme agitation?

LAURA.

Oh mama, while you were gone, a poor woman came hither: she wanted relief from you; I saw her, I promised to intercede for her, and give her the answer at six o'clock.—Her landlord has threaten'd to take all her goods for rent to-morrow morning. She hopes I shall prevail on
you

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you to plead for her to him. Dearest mama, will you grant me this favour? Indeed she deserves your goodness!

MRS. MILD MAY.

How do you know that?

LAURA.

Because, mama, she told me all her story: she has been sick; she has two children, and an old mother.

MRS. MILD MAY.

But, Laura, it is easy to say all that; nay, it may be true, and yet she may be idle and undeserving. You know I never exert myself but in favour of worthy objects. I have now no time to enquire, 'tis past seven, and very near dark; can I learn the truth of this story to-night?

LAURA.

But, mama, to-morrow will be too late.

MRS. MILD MAY.

Why then, did you not tell me the story sooner?

LAURA.

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LAURA.

I intended to do so, as soon as you came home, mama, but——

MRS. MILD MAY.

But you forgot it!--Is it not so?--You chose the pleasure of a ride, rather than the gratifying these poor people.—Thus you have lost, from your carelessness and unpunctuality, an opportunity of doing a good action, of making a whole family happy, and of increasing my love for you!

LAURA:

Oh, mama, I have been sadly to blame indeed, but I assure you this shall be the last time. Only hear me this once!--try what you can do for this poor woman; Sally knows her, nay Sophia knows her: enquire of them!--Punish me as you please, but do not punish her for my fault!

MRS. MILD MAY.

Only imagine this poor creature's disappointment—

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appointment, when told you were not at home. Think of her distress: she had then lost her only hope!—See her returning to her cottage, where she had left her mother and children anxious for the success of her petition; hear her with tears say, “Ah my children, we must be ruined; the person who promised us assistance has forgotten us!—She is gone out; she has not mentioned us to her mother, and to-morrow we shall be turned out to starve!”

LAURA, (*throwing herself at her mother's feet.*)

Oh, mama, I implore you to save me from being the cause of this misery!—Indeed, I am cured for ever of my folly; I will never be trifling, inconsiderate, and unpunctual again!

MRS. MILD MAY, (*raising her.*)

Promises of amendment do not prove any thing, yet I must hope this lesson will reach your heart!—If I were as inconsiderate as you, all the sad consequences
I have

I have described to you would be realized, and even all I can do will hardly efface from the mind of this poor woman the anguish she suffered when told you were gone out, and had not mentioned her to me.

LAURA.

Then, mama, you will be good enough to assist her?

MRS. MILD MAY.

Certainly; your breach of promise can be no reason why I should fail in my duty: but if I had waited till I heard the story from you, it would really have been too late for me to do any thing in it, as I could not have learned all I wanted to know at this time.

LAURA.

Had you then heard it before?

MRS. MILD MAY.

Yes; Sally, not finding you, came to me. I saw the poor woman; heard her story, and having had reason before to

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believe

believe it, I relieved her. Sophia has given her a box of cloaths; and she is gone home perfectly happy.

LAURA.

Oh, mama, how good you are to every body!—Indeed, you may believe, I will profit by this lesson. I can never again run such a risk of making any one miserable.

MRS. CECIL.

You must then break yourself of the habit of trifling; for you see now, as I told you this morning, it cannot be dismissed at once, whenever it is of consequence it should be!

LAURA.

Oh, it is true, indeed!—even, at least, when I came home, if I had not trifled away the time, by asking Sophia impertinent questions, I should have found it less impossible to serve this poor woman!—dear Sophia, I will never tease you again.

SOPHIA.

Believe me, it hurt me extremely, to keep the truth from you, when I saw you so distressed; but mama had commanded me not to tell you.

EUDOCIA.

As to me, I was on the point of telling.

LAURA.

Mama, do you forgive me?

MRS. MILD MAY.

I forgive you, hoping you will correct yourself, and that you now see the fault, you thought so trifling, is really of serious consequence: but altho' I am no longer *displeased*, I shall inflict a punishment in addition to that which you have already suffered. I shall not permit you to have any share in the farther assistance we mean to give this poor woman; nor to call on her with your sisters for a full fortnight; if, in that time, I see any instance of unpunctuality in your conduct, I shall extend

the time as long as I think proper.—So you will lose the pleasure of seeing her happiness, and the joy of her old mother and children, for the gift Sophia has made them!

LAURA.

Oh, mama, this is indeed a punishment—but I deserve it!—However, I hope—I am sure I shall see her at the end of the *fortnight*!

MRS. MILD MAY.

I hope you will.—But 'tis late.—Let us go down stairs to tea.—And let this occurrence teach us all never to forget our promises, or let any gratification tempt us to neglect our positive engagements.

F I N I S.

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